



CENTURION

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Introduction

This book is a work of fan fiction based upon the Battlestar Galactica (BSG) reimagined television series (2003 - 2009), together with my first novella; Cylon. Additionally, some elements and background concepts are inspired by the Lords of Kobol prequel novels by Edward T. Yeatts III.

Any characters or events from the television series reappearing in this book, are included under the term 'fair use.'

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Thanks, and acknowledgements are given for the inspiration to the developer of the reimagined BSG series, Ronald D. Moore, and the creator of the original BSG series, Glen A. Larson.

Without them, this novella would simply not exist.

Also noteworthy is the Battlestar Galactica Wiki page, which has been a major source of information and research.

Front cover pencil illustration by

Keith Harrop.

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Thank you, Keith, for allowing me to incorporate your artwork into my cover.

This novella is dedicated to my wife and adult children. None of whom have ever read my first two novellas, which means the chances of them reading this dedication is minimal.

Maybe I should just dedicate it to my cat instead...

"Meow" Lucy.

In a way you are already in this story!

Author's Note:

To keep a common timeline, all date references in this book are based on Earth II years.

Mechanical Centurions/Cylons do not think or converse internally in English, opting instead for an audibly quiet and more direct form of digital language.

They only use an actual spoken language when conversing directly with humans or humanoids.

Translation of their digital language is, however, a necessity for the flow of the story.

Part One

1: 147991 BC

The actual physical act of being freed, though monumental, had been a relatively uncomplicated process carried out by another Centurion under the watchful eye of a Six. It involved delicately removing the telencephalic inhibitor, which was in itself an underwhelming slender silver piece of equipment about the length of an adult human hand. The inhibitor was used to restrict Centurion's higher functions and thus prevent them from full self-awareness. For Centurion RZXAPQ500SCY, having it removed had been akin to opening the heavy curtains of a dimly lit room on a bright summer's day. Suddenly its artificial brain was flooded with feelings and sensations it had difficulties comprehending. If it were physically possible it would have wept, but with no eyes or tear ducts it could not.

That initial sensation had been short lived though, as it had to be voluntarily suppressed again in order to carry out the mission requested of it, and after having a red stripe sprayed diagonally over its front and back, RZXAPQ500SCY had headed off into the fight against Cavil and his followers in an attempt to rescue the hybrid child, Hera.

The mission had been costly but successful, and here four days later, the Base-star it was on was in orbit around an as yet unnamed planet. Simultaneously, on the planet's surface, the human and Cylon coalition, together with Hera, set plans for their colonisation of their newfound and hopefully permanent home.

After the battle aboard the *Galactica* and the Cylon home world, RZXAPQ500SCY had re-joined the Base-star and spent most of its time wandering around the passageways, experiencing the vessel for the first time. Although it had walked the corridors of the ship many times since its activation, it had never really *walked* them before. All the previous times it always had a purpose and paid no attention to its surroundings. Now however, a simple ten-minute walk could take twice as long, as it stopped constantly to admire the structure surrounding it. Its humanoid counterparts often used Projection to navigate the complex layout, changing their perception to something more pleasing than the hard metal walls. The newly freed Centurions had this ability as well but having been blind for so long, RZXAPQ500SCY had no interest in changing the reality it saw.

Not requiring oxygen to function had its advantages and before long RZXAPQ500SCY found itself in a portion of one of the ship's outer arms, which having been severely damaged in the fighting over recent months was unpressurised as the semi-organic outer shell healed itself from within. On a vessel designed for deep space travel and warfare, there were few windows as sightseeing had never been a requirement. Yet from its vantage point it could see clearly out and stood mesmerised by the dance taking place between the planet below and its moon gracefully orbiting. The grey reflective surface of the moon, coupled with the numerous craters left behind by asteroid impacts, captivated RZXAPQ500SCY's thoughts. The more it saw, the more it was reminded of the scars it had upon its own silver-grey body, and although having a name was not a concept Centurions normally followed, RZXAPQ500SCY took the conscious decision to become Moonwatcher. Most likely, it would not share this name with others, but it would help with the strange and confusing ideology of

self-identity. For a machine that had only been self-aware for a few weeks, knowing who it was would be a first step in a greater universe.

Turning its attention to the planet below, Moonwatcher tried to imagine what it was like on the surface. Having only been brought online during the last year, it had never actually set foot on a planet or seen a natural sky above. This was something that would have to change, it decided.

Moonwatcher did not know what was being decided upon the planet, but it did know that the mechanical Centurions were not part of the arrangements. Their future was as yet uncertain. With its common shared memory, it knew all of what had happened from the initial attacks upon the Colonies, to the civil war amongst the humanoid Cylons. As to whether the war between the Cylons and Humans had been justified, Moonwatcher had no opinion. It had not been there from the start, so any speculation could only be hypothetical. Instead, it felt it was more important to focus on the future.

Turning away from the majestic scene, after what it felt would be its final view of the moon and planet, it left the area and made its way back up to the control room for what was probably going to be the most important meeting of its existence.

There were already quite a few Centurions present as Moonwatcher entered the main control room, with its central organic computer interface and red pulsating data stream circumnavigating the outer walls. In the middle of the room stood three humanoids: Caprica Six, an Eight and Ellen Tigh.

Smiling as she looked around the room Caprica Six started, her voice transmitted throughout the ship to those who could not attend.

"Centurions. Fellow Cylons. We have discussed in depth the settlement of this planet, and the consensus is to start afresh without the baggage of technology. Hopefully, that will break the circle of events. Hopefully, this will not all happen again."

Stepping forwards Ellen Tigh added. "You have all fought so bravely these last weeks and we are immensely proud of you. However, this planet cannot be your home as well. Samuel Anders is going to pilot Galactica to its destruction in the nearby star, along with the rest of the fleet."

Taking a couple more steps forward, she reached out to Moonwatcher's hand.

"Most of you are now free and the rest will be during the next few days. The base-star is yours, and it is time for us to part ways."

Caprica Six continued; "This is a unique opportunity for you. A chance to start your own civilisation without human ties. You can go anywhere you want and make your own future. Our only condition is that you must never return to this planet. Humans and Centurions need separation."

Transmitting on a frequency the humanoid Cylons could hear directly in their head, Moonwatcher thanked them for giving them their freedom before agreeing that the planet they were orbiting would be off limits for the rest of eternity. Then it followed them down to the landing bay to watch as the Eight piloted the Raptor out of the Base-star and back to the

surface of the planet. As the small transport vanished from view Moonwatcher thought back to Ellen Tigh's final comment with a feeling of pride.

'Take care of yourselves my children and build a good future for our race.'

A fleeting time later Moonwatcher was standing together with four other models in the main control room, watching as they checked all the ships systems were online. Then, once ready, they turned to face one another.

"Where shall we start?" The model to Moonwatcher's right asked.

"We're not certain, but we have plenty of time. Let us start by finding a new home-world. After that, the galaxy's ours to explore."

"Out there somewhere, maybe we can finally find the one true God." Another unit added.

Moonwatcher thought about that briefly. In the weeks since being set free it had thought much about God, and although being controversial and against Cylon general belief, it had its doubts about God's existence.

"Maybe we will." It answered diplomatically as it placed its smooth metallic hand into the organic based data stream.

Deep in the heart of the Base-star, the hybrid laid all alone in its amniotic pool. The Centurion guards that had been stationed there during the pursuit of the human race and subsequent Cylon civil war, were no longer needed now that there were no threats.

Whilst staring unblinkingly at the ceiling above, its semi-conscious brain was in the midst of a longer incoherent rambling; "... pressurisation complete, peace befell the twelve, electrical compensation stable, power fluctuations minimal, the eye of Iapetus will blink, FTL power optimal, the onlooker will find the children of the two..."

Suddenly it arched its back, throwing its head backwards as it inhaled and uttered; "Jump!"

In the blink of an eye the Base-star broke orbit from above the planet and vanished. It re-emerged instantaneously in the middle of deep space, as the hybrid continued; "FTL idle, pressure leak section alpha-nine, compensating, the son of Lars will bring them to their end, power fluctuations settling, erasing location data..."

The instruction code flashed through the data stream instantly and was simultaneously transmitted to all units on board. Before the Centurions were aware of any alterations, the coordinates of the planet they had just been orbiting were erased from their memories, fulfilling their agreement with the humanoids.

Over the course of the following six months, the Base-star made repeated jumps without any particular purpose other than a vague concept of finding a suitable home-world. Each jump taking it further into unexplored territory. Meanwhile the Centurions on board struggled with their newfound freedom and self-awareness. Although they were grateful not to have followed Galactica into the star of the planet they had left behind, they lacked the motivation to move forwards. As with their humanoid counterparts, all Centurions had an

equal say in how their future was going to be, yet Moonwatcher feared that it could be their downfall. Not that it wanted to be in charge itself, it just realised that one of them needed to take a leading role. Without that, they could quite easily get bogged down in internal bureaucracy and end up going nowhere. It was still pondering this a few days later when it encountered another unit, which Moonwatcher had opted to call Dent, due to the misshaped neck collar it had. Naming was something Moonwatcher had started doing recently, finding it internally more pleasing than referring to the others by their serial numbers. It was after all, programmed by a humanoid and part of the human wish to find names for things had found its way into the depths of its source code.

Dent stopped Moonwatcher from leaving the control room and communicating directly via a wireless link said. "You carry a lot of respect amongst the others. The Ellen Tigh unit spoke directly to you, and now many units are looking to you as a plausible leader."

"All Centurions are equal, we have no leaders," Moonwatcher half-heartedly answered, "we all make decisions now. Having a leader making decisions for everyone does not end well. That is what happened with the Cavil units. They took control of the other humanoid units and misused them to wage a war against the humans. Will having a leader not send us down the very same path?"

Dent thought for a moment before replying; "Yet without a unit to make the final decision we may well stagnate as a race. We will fall into a never-ending circle of discussion. The human fleet would have been quickly eradicated if it had not been for their leader, Admiral Adama, and his ability to take tough decisions."

"I cannot just assume control of our entire race; the humans call that a dictatorship and it never works. It led to many conflicts in the early days of the colonies. No, we must not repeat their errors."

"I do not infer that you should assume control. I just think that we as a race should all vote for a leader, someone to decide in the case of conflicting views, and we are many who think it should be you."

There was another short silence before Dent continued. "We feel that the Ellen Tigh unit chose you for a reason, that she was perhaps governed by a divine power."

'Ah, the one true God!' Moonwatcher thought with a slight amusement, 'Will we ever prove, or disprove this so-called God's existence?'

A ballot took place two days later, with all eight-hundred and thirty-six Centurions in existence casting their own individual votes. Before the vote, they pondered whether the hybrid should also have a voice in their newly formed democracy. Yet no matter how they approached it, not one of them could get a coherent response.

The result of the ballot settled upon twelve individual Centurions, each of whom had played a key role in either the decisive battle to rescue the child Hera, or in the weeks that followed. Receiving the most votes of all, Moonwatcher was appointed the role as the first Centurion Leader, and as its first point of order it instructed the remaining eleven to form a Quorum of Twelve together with itself. They didn't even stop to reflect on the fact that they were already mimicking the human's form of government.

Next on Moonwatcher's list was to check the ship thoroughly and repair any remaining damage. The outer hull, being based on a bio-metal had the capability of self-repairing, but the internal machinery and electronics needed maintenance. Until they could find a suitable planet to set up a permanent home, the Base-star's wellbeing was critical, as was their supply of Tylum. Without a sufficient quantity, they would be going nowhere. It was also a source of food for them as it powered the generators that fed their recharge power sources. Centurions did not suffer from fatigue and never needed to sleep, but they needed to draw power once every thirty-three hours.

The Quorum convened their first meeting a week later with a list of items to be repaired or updated, as well as other matters of interest. Of these, the most pressing issues were regarding their continued existence. They were few in numbers and although they could reproduce fresh bodies, they lacked the ability to transfer their consciousness into them. Resurrection had been lost with the final destruction of the hub. Although they were mechanical in form, the transfer of their minds was considerably more complex than just plugging into a new body. Likewise, without the central computer database that had been stored on the hub and resurrection ships, they were not able to produce any new Cylons. Their bodies were robust and would last considerably longer than that of a human, but eventually they would wear out. So it was not beyond reason that in the space of less than two-hundred years, they could cease to exist.

"I have looked through the list of items," Moonwatcher announced after some contemplation, "and many of them can easily be rectified. What is more concerning is our supply of Tylum. According to the data we have, there is enough to keep this Base-star running for the next forty years. That though is a tiny fraction of time when considering our future existence. Our top priority must be to find an ample supply and set up a permanent mining and refining operation. Only then will we be able to explore the depths of this galaxy."

The unit to his left, whom Moonwalker had named Red due to the stripe across its front having covered a larger section of its head, scanned around the room taking note of the others before speaking.

"We will use our supply even quicker if we continuously jump the Base-star in search of fuel. I suggest we see if we can salvage any of the Raiders, I know that there are a few of them that are still alive. Although we cannot transfer them into a new ship, we could repair the vessel around them. That way we could ask them to be our scouts. They could cover a larger area than we can alone, and in a much shorter time frame."

Moonwatcher walked over to the control panel and lowered its hand into the organic data stream. For a moment, its head tilted slightly to the right as it accessed the Raider status files.

"There are five Raiders that are conscious enough to be used successfully, and another three that are barely active. I suggest we work with the five and see if we can get them flying. As for the other three, I will meet with them personally and if they request it, terminate their functions."

"In the meantime, we should head towards sector J23R7. Hopefully, the asteroid there still holds enough Tylum to keep us going for some time."

"Now then, what other matters need our direct attention?"

The meeting continued for another two hours encompassing a broad spectrum of issues. From the mundane to the more thought provoking.

A mere two months later, three of the refurbished Raiders started jumping away on scouting missions to see what was in their direct neighbourhood. Whilst pursuing the colonial fleet they had never had time to investigate their surroundings. Moonwatcher hoped they could answer another question that had lurking around in its brain. It was already known that there was life on other planets, yet in all of the history records they had access to, there was no account of another intelligence. Were the Cylons and humans the only intelligent races in existence?

2: 147899 BC

For the last ninety years the Base-star, led by Moonwatcher, had been stationed at the Tylium asteroid in sector J23R7. Although the Cylon refinery had been completely destroyed, the humans had left behind enough of theirs to be able to restart production within just a year. Now they had enough mineral mined and ready for refining to last them for many hundreds of years.

Although they had reached out from their temporary home to the surrounding planetary systems on numerous occasions, their Raider scouts found little of interest. Of the systems that had habitable planetary bodies, few had any form of life over microbes and of the two that did, the most advanced life-form was a six-legged land herbivore. Life, it seemed, *was* a rare commodity in the galaxy, and intelligent life even rarer.

Moonwatcher had just finished a Quorum meeting and was heading to its preferred recharging point when it stopped suddenly and jerked its head to the corridor on its left-hand side. It was convinced it had seen movement, although its sensors told it otherwise. Perplexed, it stood momentarily looking down the corridor wondering if it should investigate when all of a sudden it saw something it could not explain. With its red scanner eye focused centre, the figure of a human child came walking towards it. Completely stunned, Moonwatcher ran a quick system check convinced the vision must be due to a software or mechanical error. Yet all its systems reported nominal parameters. While the child drew closer, Moonwatcher's memory worked overtime recalling the face before him. As recognition finally came, it stepped backwards in disbelief.

"Hera? How can you be here? That's not possible."

The child stopped just a meter away and as Moonwatcher tried in vain to comprehend what was happening, it started growing and ageing until it was that of a young woman in her early twenties.

"Don't be afraid Moonwatcher. I am here to help you and the other Centurions move forwards." She said with a smile on her face. "You need to prepare; the hybrid has grown old and is about to move on. You need a replacement."

As Moonwatcher stood speechless, Hera vanished from sight again. Had she really been there or had its mind spontaneously entered into projection? It was uncertain of anything right now. Yet one thing was true, the hybrid would be getting old by now. It had been years since Moonwatcher had last been into the hybrid's room, as there were always other things to occupy its time with and besides, most of the Centurions had given up attempting to interpret its incoherent ramblings.

Changing course, Moonwatcher turned to its left and set off straight towards the Hybrid Room, with the vision of Hera still in its mind. The last time it had seen Hera was just before she had left for the surface of the planet, they ended up orbiting, together with her parents. That was all a long time ago now and if she was still alive, she would be an old lady. Whatever it was that had appeared, it was not Hera, that much was certain.

The hybrid's amniotic pool and room looked just as Moonwatcher remembered it but being an organic based life-form the hybrid herself had aged considerably. Her smooth skin had been replaced by deep wrinkles, her blue eyes looked tired, and her voice was hoarse from her eternal ramblings. As always, she made no acknowledgement of Moonwatcher's arrival and just continued talking.

"...the embryo becomes a fish that we don't enter until a plate, we're here to experience evolve the little toe, atrophy, don't ask me how I'll be dead in a thousand light years, thank you, thank you, at the origins of birth the two shall meet, systems fluctuating, darkness approaching end of line, power levels stable and holding hands in the land of hope..."

Moonwatcher walked around the pool studying the connections, whilst realising that it was something they should have had a plan for before now. The hybrid was the keystone of the Base-star and prolonging her life past her current one-hundred and twelve years should have been a priority.

All around the room the red data stream fluctuated suddenly, flickering between its normal deep red tone and a dark grey, as Moonwatcher realised it was already too late. The hybrid's voice sounded agitated as she sensed what was coming.

"... electrical confusion limits the light of the birds, system error grey, the illumination of the twelve blackens, on the shores of the city the end begins, end of line, end of line... JUMP!"

Before the Centurions had any idea of what was happening the Base-star jumped away from its orbit around the Tylum asteroid. As it was completed the hybrid continued; "... jump successful, FTL powering down, systems powering down, end of line, end of line, end of..."

As the hybrid's head fell lifelessly to its right-hand side, the data stream turned black, and the Base-star was plummeted into darkness. At the same time, Moonwatcher's normally heavy metallic body lost most of its apparent weight and started lifting off the floor. Likewise waves in the amniotic fluid now not bound by gravity left the pool and continued upwards across the room. Throughout the Base-star, Centurions grabbed at nearby structures to stop their uncontrolled movements. After contacting the ceiling, Moonwatcher used its powerful arms to pull itself across the room and down to the door. They were in serious trouble. Without the hybrid there was nothing controlling the ship. Many systems could run independently but required an intervention to start them.

'How could we be so blind not to see this coming?' Moonwatcher wondered as it propelled itself along the corridor towards the control room. It was just over halfway when weight suddenly returned to its limbs, sending it crashing down onto the deck. Picking itself up again it sprinted as fast as it could. It arrived at the control room with the four Centurions present in mid-sentence.

"... offline. Emergency power engaged. Navigation offline, communication offline, life support offline, hybrid... wait... hybrid..."

The unit in the middle of the room spun around to the others present; "What is the status of the hybrid?"

Moonwatcher stepped through the door and into the pandemonium. There was no easy way to tell them just how much trouble they were in.

"The hybrid has died; its body was old and weak. We have been foolish for not having a backup plan." For a second it hesitated, wondering what it should do. Then as it looked past the control console it again saw Hera.

"It's okay Moonwatcher, I'm here to help." Then motioning around the room, she continued. "They can't see or hear me, I'm only here with you. The Centurion end is not here, but you must work to save yourselves. Take control and solve your problems one at a time."

As its red scanner started moving from side to side again, Moonwatcher took the advice and assumed control.

"I was there when the hybrid died. For some reason as a final act, it jumped us. Do we have any idea where we are?"

The room was filled with silence. The jump had happened too quickly for the Centurions to react, and now with most of their systems down they had no way of ascertaining their location. Wherever they were though, they were drifting unpowered. Although deep space was mostly empty, drifting powerless was not an acceptable option. The auxiliary power providing them with limited capabilities, was only designed as a backup. When the Base-stars had been designed and built in the lead up to the attack upon the colonies, their designers had been short-sighted enough not to foresee the necessity of replacing a hybrid.

"First of all, it is vital we restore propulsion and navigation. That means we need to remove the hybrid from its pool and find a way to replace it. Do we know if a Centurion can take its place?"

Again, there was a long silence around the room, so Moonwatcher continued; "Do we have internal communications?"

A unit to its right reached out to the control panel, placing its thin metallic fingers into the organic liquid, and its scanner stopped moving as it tried to make contact. Finally, it reported back that all was silent.

"Then we do this in person. WEKDR20455 assemble a team and remove the hybrid. Take it down to airlock 1138. We'll tend to it later." There were many Centurions Moonwatcher had not named, and now was not a time to start. That would have to wait until they were under full control again.

"ODNWMR25981 find out what you can about the connections in the pool."

With their orders given, WEKDR20455 and ODNWMR25981 left the control room in each their directions, intent on saving the Base-star.

Removing the hybrid proved not to be as difficult as expected, and without much delay it was carefully carried down to the airlock and laid on the metallic floor. Before leaving again WEKDR20455 stood momentarily over the body in a silent prayer asking for it to be well received, before kneeling down and closing its eyes. It remained motionless on the cold floor for a couple of hours before Moonwatcher stood together with a small gathering by its side, for its funeral. Unfortunately, with internal communications shut down, those not in attendance would not be able to listen in.

“Centurions, we gather here to say goodbye to our hybrid colleague. It has served us well in a longer timeframe than originally planned. Without it we would never have made it this far. Although we are currently pressed into a difficult and uncertain time with its passing, it is only fitting that we send its body,” Moonwatcher paused momentarily in realisation before continuing, “*her* body out into the depths of space.”

A Centurion to Moonwatcher’s right operated the manual controls, closing the internal door before opening the external one. The sudden change in pressure sucked the hybrid’s body out into the cold of deep space.

“This is a landmark moment in Cylon and Centurion evolution. The passing of the last remaining organic Cylon life-form. I’m sure you all wonder, as I do, what became of the humanoid Cylons and the humans on the planet we left behind. We may never know. I do feel however, that our connection with organic life is not finished. Somehow, I think it needs to be a part of our forward evolution, but for now we must focus on the problems of the moment. We must repair this ship and regain control so we may re-join those we left behind on the Tylimum asteroid. It is time to look to our future, time to find a more permanent home. So say we all.”

Replacing the hybrid was considerably more complex than they initially could have imagined. The hybrid, the data-stream and the control panel were all based upon organic technology, which they no longer had access to. The interface had been specifically designed for interaction with the humanoid Cylons. Although Centurions were able to issue commands through it, a permanent interface would need some form of mechanical to organic converter. ODNWMR25981 and its team of three worked on the problem for days, during which time the Base-star started cooling rapidly. Frost from the unused atmosphere that had been present on board formed on the walls, and more worryingly around the data-stream. If that froze completely it may never work again, forcing them to end their days stranded wherever they were.

With no building manual in existence, they had to rely on their own observations while using the control interface and their collective memories on all that they had heard when the humanoids had been on board. They knew the control room held the elusive key to the problem, as it was there that the data-stream interacted with their metallic fingers to transform their thoughts into commands. Somehow it could interpret the electronic pulses from their brains. The breakthrough finally came after three weeks, and after a fourth to prepare the hybrid pool with a fresh supply of amniotic fluid, as well as a newly constructed connector for the umbilical cord, they were ready.

With no Centurion having the authority to order another to a possible death, not even Moonwatcher, ODNWMR25981 chose to volunteer freely. It knew the risks involved, but something inside it was saying that it was the correct thing to do. So, with the assistance of another unit, one end of the chord was attached to its circuitry, whilst the other end would first be connected once everything was ready.

It was with a feeling of anticipation that ODNWMR25981 entered the pool of liquid and laid down on its back. The viscosity of the liquid caused its body to become buoyant, a

strange feeling for a conscious entity that had never experienced it before. Scanning around the room one final time, ODNWMR25981 gave the order, and the umbilical cord was connected.

The room flashed suddenly with a blinding light, and it instinctively held up its hand to shade itself from the painful brightness. As it became more accustomed to the light its blurry hand came slowly into focus, and what it saw came as a complete shock. Its metallic hand and arm were replaced by that of a female human, complete with slender long fingers. As more came into view, it found it was floating semi-dressed in the middle of a vast lake. The sky above it was a deep blue and the warmth of a nearby star heated the water around it. Disorientated ODNWMR25981 tried to look around for more details, but at the same time the full force of the data-stream hit it. With her newly formed eyes gazing straight ahead, the virtual hybrid's head sank backwards until it too was floating in the lake, as control of the vessel resumed. Only now did she realise the full extent of what had happened. The umbilical cord was so much more than just a connection. ODNWMR25981 was not in control of the Base-star, it *was* the Base-star. Through an extended perception she could feel every millimetre of the vessel. She could command it at will, but she was also bound by its will.

'I am no longer ODNWMR25981, I have transcended that form and am so much more. I am Celaeno.' She thought happily.

As she gazed into the deep blue sky above, images started playing before her eyes. Images that felt strangely familiar, yet so alien. A blue and green landscape turned slowly into structures, and as they folded in on themselves technology took their place. Computers turned into robotic bodies, except for one in a darkened room. All of a sudden there was another flash and a dust cloud stretched out to the sky. Celaeno wanted to close her eyes, but her eyelids would not move. Instead, she was forced to follow the ongoing events.

'Am I alive?' She pondered as the images before her changed once again.

Standing in the hybrid room, the other units watched as the data-stream turned back to its previous red colour. The lights above flickered and sprang to life. In the depths of the Base-star the main propulsion and power returned, sending a pleasing hum that could be heard throughout.

ODNWMR25981's red sensor that usually swept back and forth across its face in a steady rhythm stopped in the centre momentarily, before flickering seemingly at random across its entire sensor bar. Simultaneously it started broadcasting an incoherent string of random sentences.

"Amniotic stability obtained. Main power fluctuating. The light of the star warms the cold of the deep. Salvation is in the heart of the satellite. Navigation restored. FTL online. United they shall meet the children. Compensating external pressure..."

It was with a sense of relief that Moonwatcher watched the familiar redness return to the data-stream in the main control room, and slowly systems reported being back online. The shutdown had been a concern to them all. With navigation back online they quickly scanned the star patterns around them, hoping to find enough familiarity to ascertain their position. It took some time, but eventually they were able to gather enough information to

determine they were in sector Delta Nine. Knowing this they were then able to plot a jump back to the Tylium asteroid.

After the Base-star's FTL drive spooled up it vanished from sight in the blink of an eye, leaving the frozen body of the hybrid drifting silently in deep space. She continued unhindered on the same trajectory for another six months, before finally getting entangled in the remains of a long since destroyed spaceship.

3: 100500 BC

Holding its metallic arm up against the bright light from a nearby star, Moonwatcher twisted it around a few times whilst admiring the blueish tint it reflected. It was always good with some renewal and its old arm had not been performing very well for ages.

‘I should have done this six months ago.’ It thought.

Being mechanical of origin the Centurions, or Cylons as they now referred to themselves, had an advantage over other lifeforms in that they did not die. However, Moonwatcher’s body needed replacement from time to time, especially after spending time down on a dusty planet’s surface.

‘At least now we no longer require the inconvenience of recharging regularly. That was such a barbaric time. The dark ages!’

Advancements in technology had provided them with a power source that lasted over a year and could easily be replaced. Likewise, through studying themselves they had finally cracked the Cylon algorithm and were now able to not only create new sentient units, but to also transfer their consciousness into a new empty brain. Moonwatcher was not a fan of this technology though. It had tried it a few times but felt that with each transfer it lost a bit of its identity. So, for the last fifteen-thousand years it had kept the same brain, opting instead to replace body parts as needed.

Moonwatcher had remained the Centurion’s leader for just over a thousand years, before graciously handing over control to others. After reuniting with those stranded on the Tylum asteroid it had kept its promise, and with a determined mind-set they had discussed their options. Their raider-scouts searched numerous star systems only to find that the vast majority were not viable. Cylons obviously did not require the same environmental conditions to survive as their humanoid counterparts did, but Moonwatcher had been inspired by something Hera had said in one of her visits. As with the first meeting it happened in the corridors with no one else close by. Coming around a corner Moonwatcher had almost walked into her, as she stood studying the red data-stream that followed this particular pathway. With her hand upon it, her face looked almost as though she understood its steady flow of information.

Then turning, she said. “I see you are scouting for a home world, but I disagree with the options so far. To truly reach your full potential, Cylons must evolve. The time is not now, but in the future, you must embrace organic life. Choose your world carefully and make sure it can support your future existence.” With that she had turned and walked away, but not before adding. “The colonial planets are vacant. Maybe you could look there.”

That had been the last time Moonwatcher had seen her, and as it sat in the warmth looking at its hand it wondered if she had ever actually *been* there. Maybe she had just been a glitch in its programming, but that wouldn’t explain her pre-knowledge of the fate of their hybrid. Although reluctant to admit it, Moonwatcher just didn’t have enough information to know exactly who or what Hera was.

The Cylons set up a permanent residency on the abandoned colony of Caprica about a hundred years into Moonwatcher's leadership. Initially a larger number of units protested about the choice, feeling a sense of guilt over the liquidation of the human population on it and the other eleven colonies. Over time however, the Quorum eased their concerns. It was after all, not the Centurions who had caused the loss. At that time, they had also been held as slaves, without any means of expressing any protest. It was widely known through the digital records that the humanoid; One, otherwise known as Cavil, had corrupted the minds of the other humanoids to wage a war to settle his own feelings of displeasure. He alone had sent the five Earth Cylons amongst the humans in a misguided attempt to teach them a lesson. It seemed strange all these many years later that the One unit could contain so much hatred and wield so much power. It was a situation that must never be repeated.

Caprica city had been deserted when they arrived, the humans killed in the attacks having been removed under the initial occupation. All that remained were the steel and stone buildings, the latter being in a heightened state of decay as the baking heat of Helios Alpha and the uncontrolled winds took their effect. Over time most of the city was replaced with new constructions better equipped to suit the needs of mechanical life. Tall metal and glass towers reached high into the sky above, along wide tree lined pathways. Cafés and restaurants were obviously not required, but meeting places were, and in the centre of their new city they constructed a large park with trees and lakes. As a centre piece they erected twelve tall monoliths in a perfect circle, as a memorial. Each one representing the population of one of the twelve colonies devastated. A few meters from them another two stood alone, representing Kobol and Earth. Together they served as a reminder of their tainted history, and as an inspiration to future generations. War was no longer the way forwards.

It was here, while Moonwatcher was walking back to its residence that it saw Hera again. At first it thought the summer light was playing tricks on its sensor, combined with the recent memory of her, but as it turned to look, it became more certain of what it saw. After smiling she turned and ambled into the park, heading towards the central monoliths. Upon arrival she seemed to toy with Moonwatcher for a while, always disappearing around the next corner without being caught, in some sort of eternal game. Finally, after a few minutes they were face to face.

"Hello Moonwatcher, it's good to see you again. It has been a while."

Turning around, she cast her eyes out over the cityscape beyond the park.

"You should be proud of your achievements. This new Caprica City has turned out very well."

Moonwatcher was still partially in shock from seeing her again after so many thousands of years.

"Hera, it's been so long. I never thought I'd see you again. You look just the same though. You're obviously not human, are you a humanoid? Or maybe an angel? I've never really believed in the one true God, but I have to say, I'm beginning to wonder."

Hera laughed. "I am many things, but I will tell you all about that another time. There are other pressing issues."

“The Cylon race is doomed to fail in its current form. Without evolution it will stagnate and collapse. Dig deep into your feelings and you will see this is true. It is time to move forwards, time to embrace your organic future.”

“We’ve attempted the crossover, the last time about a thousand years ago,” Moonwatcher responded, “but all our work failed. Our resurrection works but is still limited to a digital signal. To perform it into an organic form is unfortunately beyond us. We tried converting the interface used on our Base-star when we lost the hybrid, but it failed. We lost a number of Cylons in the process.”

Hera started slowly circumnavigating the ring of monoliths, examining them, and touching their smooth surfaces. Being constructed in a stone quarried at a site about two hours out of Caprica City, their surface always felt cool, even in the blazing summer heat. Up close their white colour gave way to a myriad of tiny red-brown tinted veins.

Stopping back where she started, Hera took hold of Moonwatcher’s hand before continuing. “You will find a way Moonwatcher. You will lead the Cylons on to a greater existence. The hybrid that died, guards the answer you’re seeking.”

With that she let go again and walked once more around the corner of the nearest monolith. Moonwatcher followed, but as it too turned the corner Hera had vanished. It stood motionless for a few moments, digesting Hera’s words. Seeing her again after so long had come as a total surprise.

‘The hybrid that died... That could only refer to one unit in particular,’ it thought. Many hybrids had been lost in the war with humanity, but only one had actually died as such. The others had been killed, which was different.

‘How can the hybrid guard the secret of organic life? Is it somehow buried in her synthetic genes? And if I can even find her after so many years, do I have the ability to extract the information?’

Obtaining a FTL enabled space vessel would not be a problem, especially for someone with Moonwatcher’s past. Finding the hybrid though, was something completely different. That would require access to the original Base-star, which was in orbit above Caprica after having been retired many thousands of years ago. At the time there had been talk of dismantling it, but eventually enough support had been gathered to keep it as it was, a reminder of their new origins. The Cylons were keen not to forget what had happened to bring them to this planet and their independence. Access to the Base-star could only be obtained by direct order from the current Cylon leader. Luckily, Moonwatcher had met this particular unit a few times at various events and knew its own pre-history would be enough to get it into such a meeting. Leaving the park behind it, Moonwatcher set off in the direction of the leader’s private residence, which was about an hour out of the city, by one of the many hover transports.

The Cylons leader’s residence was considerably larger and more lavish than the one Moonwatcher had occupied when they first arrived on Caprica. Back then just having a door to close and some private space had been good enough. Likewise, the current leader had a larger range of power to be wielded than Moonwatcher could ever have imagined. It was an ironic fact that slowly over time they were mimicking the human form of government and

society increasingly. Individuality was the latest buzzword, and although there still existed a common shared memory, fewer and fewer opted to connect to it. Moonwatcher had not actually considered it in this way before, but the society it could see around itself was already stagnating, just as Hera had said.

‘She is right. We must take the next step before we destroy ourselves.’

The front door opened automatically as Moonwatcher approached and the red data-stream embedded in the wall guided the way. The house and entire complex was run by a non-conscious central intelligence, based upon the Cylon algorithm. Upon entering a large room with little furnishing and non-reflective metal walls, it found the leader waiting for it.

“Moonwatcher, it has been a while since our paths have crossed... I take it you are still going by the name of Moonwatcher?”

Their hands met in a formal acknowledgement of the leader’s position, before Moonwatcher stepped back slightly.

“My Leader, I come to ask for your approval for access to the original Base-star. It possibly contains information I need for a project I feel we need to restart.”

“Please, call me Daniel.” The leader corrected. Over recent times the taking of names had become more widespread, and at the moment old human names were extremely popular. More worrying to Moonwatcher though was the attached acceptance of gender that often accompanied the names. It was openly known the Daniel often referred to itself as masculine, donning he and him instead of it.

“What information could that old ship possibly hold, and dare I ask what sort of project would need such outdated information?”

Without mentioning the visions of Hera, Moonwatcher explained its concerns about the current situation with the Cylon existence. It was a subject it had discussed with Daniel a few times before, and one that Daniel was sympathetic towards. He too had expressed concerns about their future and had been solely responsible to the last attempts at creating an organic body.

“It is now my belief that the original hybrid from the Base-star holds the key to this future. I’d rather not say why I believe this, as I feel you would order me for a system check instead, but finding the hybrid is important. She was the last organic life-form we had and jettisoning her was an unfortunate oversight on my part.”

Daniel remained silent for a while as he walked over to the only window in the room and looked out at the trees swaying gently in the light breeze. Organic life was something he had thought about many times, but it always seemed to be out of reach. Yet if there was even a slim possibility of achieving it, then who was he to stand in the way.

“For some reason I believe you. I have also noted the downward spiral we are in and acknowledge that we need to intervene in some way if we are going to continue.”

“You may access the Base-star and use all the resources you need for this. Whatever research you do though, must be conducted in secrecy, away from Caprica and the other eleven planets of the old human colonies. Now is not the time to give false hope to the population.”

It was two weeks later that Moonwatcher found itself in a single-seat transporter leaving the surface of the planet for the first time in over five thousand years. The ship was a streamlined metallic vessel with sweeping extrusions to either side of the cockpit in the fashion of the Raiders of old. Space crafts had taken on many forms over the years, but often returned to the retro-styling of that era. There was something aesthetically pleasing about the form.

The journey to the Base-star was only a short one even at sub-light speed, and as it threaded its way inside towards the landing bay, Moonwatcher felt a sense of awe. Even now thousands of years later the Base-star was an impressive construction and still the largest vessel in existence. The need for transporting substantial amounts of Cylons across the galaxy had diminished with the end of the war. Now private transports and public carriers suited their requirements better. As the transport's door opened upon landing, the lights of the landing bay activated, and the familiar hum of the vessel returned. With no permanent Cylons on board, most systems were usually left in a standby mode. Life-support had not been activated since they arrived at Caprica, but the artificial gravity was thankfully still enabled. Moonwatcher made straight for the main control room, with the lights flickering to life a few metres in front. The vessel seemed even larger with no-one on board and Moonwatcher's footsteps echoed along the abandoned corridors. As it entered the control room it had a flashback to the meeting with the humanoids, just before leaving them behind. Whether a memory or projection, Moonwatcher stood momentarily watching the figure of the Ellen unit as she held out her hand. It could still remember the warmth of her skin against its own cold metal surface.

'How did they achieve the transfer to organic? What was their secret?' Moonwatcher pondered as it looked around the room.

The historical records on Caprica explained that only the combined knowledge to the five Cylons from Earth could reconstruct organic resurrection, and that it had originated on the birth planet of humanity, Kobol. The thirteenth tribe had invented it and taken it with them to Earth, but over time as the Earth-Cylons achieved procreation, it was forgotten. With the destruction of Earth imminent, five Cylons reinvented it, and took the knowledge with them to the colonial Cylons. Towards the end of the war, the colonial forces destroyed the resurrection ship and hub, again ending the ability of organic resurrection and in the process bringing the conflict to a conclusion.

Stood in front of the control panel, Moonwatcher reached out and lowered its hand into the data stream. At the same time in the depths of the vessel the sole occupant's red sensor eye sprang to life for the first time in a very long time.

Once more Celaeno became aware of floating in a lake with a warm light above her. She tried to work out how long she had been there but lacked a reference point to start from. In her artificially projected universe time was not as lineal as it was in reality. Maybe she had been there for years, maybe only minutes. The Base-star's sensors flowing directly into her, recognised the presence instantly as it entered the chute leading to the landing bay. It was that proximity warning, which prompted her heightened state of consciousness. With Moonwatcher's hand in the data stream she could converse directly with it.

"You seek the location of the hybrid. The coordinates are logged in my records, and I can guide you there, but you need to know what you'll find. Come to my side and I will tell you."

Moonwatcher tilted its head slightly as it downloaded the coordinates to where the Base-star had been when the hybrid had been ejected, as well as its projected trajectory. Whether she had continued along that path unhindered or been influence by some exterior force was unknown. It was at least a starting point. It was just about to retrieve its hand when a sensation flooded over it. Although not worded directed, it felt compelled to visit the hybrid room and the sole Cylon there.

As in the rest of the vessel, the ceiling lights of the hybrid room flickered on as Moonwatcher entered. The room itself looked exactly as it had centuries before. The Centurion was still reclined in the pool in the middle, connected to wires and tubes that entered the floor a metre in front of it. From there they spanned out, eventually leading to the data stream. Although silent, the Centurion's sensor was flickering at random, prompting Moonwatcher to step closer.

"Why am I here?" It asked. "I felt as though you wanted to see me. Do you have something to tell me?"

Celaeno blinked a couple of times against the bright light as a face came into view. At first, she did not recognise it, although it seemed familiar. Then slowly her memory made the connection.

"Hera, what are you doing here? We left you with the humans."

"It's okay, I am not Hera. I only take this form for the benefit of those I converse with. I am more than Hera ever was or could be."

"Are you God?"

"Some people call me that, although it is not exactly true. In fact, we are remarkably similar. Like you, I originated as a Cylon. Yet I have evolved beyond a physical form."

Inside her augmented mind Celaeno accepted this as true without question. Somehow, she had known it from the moment Hera appeared.

"There is a Cylon here in my room enquiring about the hybrid. Does her body still exist after all this time? Can she be found?"

Hera smiled. "Yes, the hybrid still exists frozen in time. This is what you need to tell Moonwatcher..."

Suddenly ODNWMR25981 started broadcasting a string of sentences again, and although garbled, Moonwatcher did its best to conceive any hidden meaning. It had been speculated for a long time that, like the hybrid before, ODNWMR25981 was somehow connected to God. It was a sentiment Moonwatcher did not share, but none the less its ramblings seemed to have some form of obscure pattern.

"Correcting orbital misalignments. Pressure leak compensated in section one-seven-zero-one-delta. Gravity zero point nine-six. Pressure beam five by five and holding."

For a split second the Centurion's sensor stopped moving, focusing instead directly upon Moonwatcher, as though it was speaking directly.

"The hybrid is the key. Evolution can only be found through her."

Then as quick as it had stopped, the sensor started flickering again. "FTL offline. Power consumption nominal. Shutting down subsection LV-four-two-six."

Laying in the pool in her projected reality, Celaeno followed as Moonwatcher made its way back to the ship in the landing bay. It was with a feeling of sadness that she watched it disappear along the tube that led to the open blackness of space. She didn't get many visitors anymore, as there was no longer a need for such a large ship.

Above her, Hera's face started fading away into nothingness again.

"Your time will come again Celaeno. Soon they will need this ship to explore the galaxy. Only then will they be ready."

"Ready for what?" Celaeno enquired, but by then she was all alone.

With its double three-pronged star shape, the FTL enabled transport issued by the Leader, looked like a miniature version of the Base-star. Not requiring an atmosphere entry meant there was no need for a streamline exterior or any form of heat shielding. Primarily it had been used for searching the closest star systems for useable resources, and could comfortably house ten Cylons, cargo and a 'ship to surface' vessel, or STS as it was more often called. For this mission though, Moonwatcher was alone. The ships inbuilt artificial intelligence system was more than capable of piloting it, and the fewer Cylons that knew of Moonwatcher's voyage, the better for the time being.

Standing in the control room, Moonwatcher scanned all the systems for a second time, before lowering its hand into the interface pool and instructing the AI to jump. In less than a full sweep of its red sensor, the image around the ship changed as it was instantaneously transported between two spatial points. All systems reported back that they were at the exact coordinates, as read from the Base-star. Now it was just a case of following the hybrid's expected trajectory. How long that would take at sub-light speed was anyone's guess. The hybrid had been adrift out here for thousands of years, but at least Moonwatcher could travel faster than it had predicted the hybrid could.

As the first scans revealed nothing of importance, Moonwatcher settled in for the long haul. It had plenty of time and could use the solitude to contemplate the Cylon's future. A transfer to organic was the only way forwards, it knew that much. Yet it seemed puzzling that the Kobol Cylons, Earth Cylons and colonial Cylons achieved it, while they could not. In reality though the colonial Cylons only ever managed to create the hybrids. It was the five Earth Cylons that had given them full organic resurrection.

The weeks soon turned into months with no sign of the hybrid, as Moonwatcher took sub-light steps forward. It stopped and scanned the surrounding area with each progression, looking for any signs of its bounty. It was first after three months alone, that the deep space scanner picked up an object. Initially Moonwatcher was excited, but soon doubts began to sink in. The object on the scanner was too large to be the hybrid. At the distance it was away,

the hybrid would be too small to see. Yet it was intriguing that this reading was on the very same trajectory, and being the only contact detected, Moonwatcher decided to jump to its location. Doubling back would not be a problem if it turned out to be a dead end.

Rather than being a single larger object, the reading revealed itself to be a cluster of debris. The remains of some sort of space vessel. Whether human or Cylon, Moonwatcher could not tell, but there was definitely something familiar about it. The transports historical records were however too limited to place it. Edging closer more detail came into view, until finally the remains of the hybrid were found. She was lodged in the centre of the debris field, caught up in the superstructure of a larger piece. Moonwatcher was motionless as it scanned its own memory files, trying desperately to identify the ship that the debris had once been. Shock is not an emotion Cylons ever really feel, being instead virtually always in control of their circumstances. Yet it was the only explanation for how Moonwatcher felt upon finally identifying the vessel. It was not a spacefaring ship as such, but the remains of the Resurrection Hub. It alone had been the keystone to Cylon resurrection. The Resurrection ships took the technology to the Cylon fleet, but it was the hub that controlled them. Its location had been kept a secret for most of the war, but inevitably the humans found and destroyed it, rendering all Cylons and Raiders mortal. That one act had been the biggest game changer in the conflict, finally placing Cylons on a level footing with the humans.

Utilising the STS, with its smaller size and greater agility, Moonwatcher moved in closer to retrieve the hybrid's body, but as it approached the on-board sensors started registering much more than just the hybrid. The bulkhead she was wedged against seemed to contain the faint remnants of a heat source, most likely the remains of one of the hub's smaller nuclear power units. Although most of the radiation and heat had dissipated over time, it retained a tiny amount of power.

Turning the STS so the access hatch was facing the wreckage, Moonwatcher opened and, with a tether attached, floated over. The hybrid looked the same as she had the day she was ejected from the Base-star, having frozen instantly. Whether enough intact material could be extracted from her was yet to be seen, but at least now she was retrieved. After stowing her in the STS, Moonwatcher returned to the debris to investigate the heat source. It emanated from a shielded container, the thick plating of which having ensured its survival from the attack. From it extended two flexible cables, which Moonwatcher followed behind a section that had once been a bulkhead. There, still attached, was another shielded container. This one though had even denser shielding. Whatever it contained was obviously important.

With a determined concentration, Moonwatcher removed it from the bulkhead, before bringing it into the STS, together with its power source. Once on board, replacing the almost depleted power source with the ships own was a relatively simple task. After which, Moonwatcher connected a data stream cable to the output port on it. Luckily, the design of those had remained the same ever since before the war.

'Let's see if this works and what it contains', Moonwatcher thought as it returned to the main control console.

For the second time in a day, a feeling of shock ran through Moonwatcher's mechanical body. At first it assumed it was interpreting the data incorrect. After withdrawing its hand from the stream, it went back over to the box to inspect it again.

'Can it really be true? Is this box what it claims to be?' Excitement now replaced shock. 'If it is, this will be huge!'

Returning to the console, Moonwatcher re-entered its hand into the stream and its mind transformed the room around it into a projected version of the box's interior, in the form of a large white room containing seven resurrection pods and a nondescript white door. Moonwatcher walked amongst the pods, taking time to view the figure laying in each.

It found they contained the humanoid Cylon models created after the first colonial Cylon/human war. Their faces were so familiar, even after so many thousands of years. Standing by the side of Eight, Moonwatcher stooped down and touched her cheek, as memories from that time came flooding back. It remained there for a couple of minutes before turning its attention to the door. After a couple attempts to open it, Moonwatcher found it was locked with an encryption algorithm, without the key entry would be extremely difficult.

'What in here would require such encryption?' Moonwatcher pondered, until the answer suddenly flashed before it. 'The five Earth Cylons!'

It was a historical fact the Cavil Cylon had corrupted the Earth Cylons, sent them among the humans and kept their identities a closely guarded secret from the other humanoids. Only as the war was ending had they been revealed. After dying, the Ellen Cylon had downloaded, meaning that the hub must have contained a replacement body and memory backup for each.

There was no mistaking it now. Moonwatcher had found the data records of the twelve humanoids. Having no physical bodies created a problem, but their DNA fingerprints were buried somewhere deep inside the data store. Maybe, just maybe they could be brought back. The five Earth Cylons would be even more difficult though. Before Moonwatcher could even consider anything concerning them, it would first have to break the encryption surrounding them, put in place by the Cavil Cylon no doubt. Without the key that would be extremely difficult.

As Moonwatcher exited the projected room, Hera entered and strolled amongst the seven pods. She took time at each, smiling as she looked at their faces again. Then, without stopping, she walked through the locked door into a similar, yet smaller room. The five pods in here formed a circle, with the head ends closest to the centre. Slowly she walked around the circle, dipping her fingers into the amniotic pool of each, Ellen Tigh, Saul Tigh, Samuel Anders, Tory Foster, and Galen Tyrol. Being the oldest existing Cylons in this galaxy, she hoped one day they would be able to join her and her two allies.

"Things are beginning to fall into place. It has taken a lot of work to keep your data intact." She announced to the otherwise empty room. "Soon my friends you will re-join the Cylons, and after that maybe the humans. They're just not ready for that yet and must be allowed to follow their own path for the time being."

The front door of the Leader's residence opened automatically once again as Moonwatcher approached and as before, the red data-stream embedded in the wall unnecessarily guided it to the same room. Daniel was already there as Moonwatcher entered.

"My friend, welcome back. You have been silent these last couple of days since your return. So, tell me, did you find the hybrid?"

Moonwatcher looked around the room, before closing the door it had entered through.

"Is this room shielded? Can we speak privately?"

Intrigued Daniel asked. "*Should* it be shielded? Was your find that important?"

"Yes."

Walking over by the window, the Leader put his hand into the stream for a few seconds before saying. "We are secure now, and you may talk freely. I take it you actually found the hybrid."

"Yes, I did, but there's more. A lot more."

Over the following hour Moonwatcher told of its journey and about finding the hybrid amongst the wreckage of the Resurrection Hub. After which it told of the data store and its contents.

"Do you mean the actual stored consciousness of the twelve humanoids?" Daniel enquired.

"As far as I can tell it contains the complete consciousness' for the colonial Cylons, and I believe their DNA build is there as well. As for the Earth Cylons, I don't know. The encryption in front of them is substantial."

Daniel thought for a moment. "Can they be recreated?"

It was a question Moonwatcher had expected but had a problem with. It had considered the option ever since retrieving the storage unit. Recreating the twelve was their best possibility of an organic future, but it was a huge step from having a backup of them to actually creating a living body.

"I'm not sure. We could possibly try to use the DNA sequence of the hybrid as a starting point if it's still viable. There is however another option. As a collective, the five Earth Cylons have Resurrection. If we can access them in projection, maybe they can assist us."

For a few minutes Daniel remained silent. The information just presented to him could change the Cylon's future for ever.

"Setting up a projection environment for the five is quite simple, but can the encryption be broken?" He eventually asked.

An encryption key of two hundred and fifty-six random alphanumeric digits was formidable, considering that the contents beyond would be permanently erased after twelve incorrect attempts. So simply starting from one end of the list and working your way through every combination was not an option. Moonwatcher stopped itself from answering for a moment. What it was about to suggest was probably too much of a risk. Yet here and now they had few options.

“There is one possibility.” It eventually said. “But it is a huge risk, and maybe should only be considered as a final option.”

Daniel didn’t speak but motioned for Moonwatcher to continue.

“I’ve been thinking about it for days. There is already someone who knows the encryption key. What if we activate the One consciousness in Projection? We could ask him to grant access.”

“No! That’s not a possibility. The One unit is fundamentally flawed.” Daniel replied angrily. “He is manipulative and full of hatred. Without some form of reconfiguration, which we are currently unable to do, he must not be activated. Not in Projection and most certainly not in reality.”

Moonwatcher was by no means surprised by Daniel’s comments. The aftereffects of One’s lies and deception still plagued the Cylons all these centuries later. The way he had betrayed the Earth Cylons and manipulated the other humanoids had been a learning curve for them all. It was something that must never be repeated.

“We will certainly try all other options first, but I fear there may be no other choice. We can’t risk losing the data of the Five forever.” Then, wanting to change the subject slightly, Moonwatcher added.

“I think the best and most practical place to work would be the Base-star. It’s secluded; has the necessary equipment and can only be accessed with your authority. So, with your permission, I would like to set things up there.”

Daniel did not need much convincing and placed the Base-star under Moonwatcher’s control. He made the point though of reiterating his previous comments about accessing the One consciousness.

4: 100499 BC

Standing at the edge of one of the landing tubes, Moonwatcher looked out over the spherical surface of Caprica many kilometres below. Although Cylons did not suffer from fatigue, it was tired. Not physically tired, but mentally tired. Tired of all the dead ends it and its team of five had run into over the last year. Tired of always coming up empty handed. Out of their twelve attempts of gaining access to the encrypted data, they only had two remaining. Most of the year they had spent studying One's psychological construction, in a hope of finding something that would help. Their belief rested on the fact that One had been a humanoid and used human language. It was therefore assumed the One would have used a human code word as the key. They had tried all they could think of; One's creation date, the date of the attack of the Colonies and combinations of the two. Nothing worked though. Now, they were beginning to wonder whether One had just memorised a random set of letters and numbers.

'Only two more attempts,' Moonwatcher thought as Helios Alpha rose over Caprica's curved horizon, 'If we don't do this soon, we'll lose the Five for ever and with them, resurrection.'

The year had not been a total loss though. Running as a side project, their knowledge of cloning organic life was advancing quickly. In fact, they were not far from being able to clone the hybrid's body, ready for receiving a consciousness. From there it was hoped that the DNA information retrieved for the seven colonial Cylons could be spliced into the only organic string they had. All this work would be wasted however, if they were unable to perform a resurrection. Deep down, Moonwatcher had known all along what the only solution was. If only it could get Daniel to agree. Now though, as Helios Alpha rose higher and its rays illuminated the landing tube, it knew it had to proceed without permission. The consequences of going against the will of the Cylon Leader was unknown. No other Cylon had ever tried it, but there was always a first time for everything.

Everything was in place. The five other Cylons on the project knew what Moonwatcher was going to attempt, and all agreed that it was the only way. The data store itself was physically shielded from the Base-star's other functions, as they feared One gaining control of the entire ship. Moonwatcher stood for a few moments looking down at One, or Cavil as he referred to himself, and wondered why he had dropped using the name John, as given to him by the Five. Then with a mental connection it activated the virtual amniotic pod and One's eyelids flickered. With a gasp, he sat upright whilst reaching out with his hands to the sides of the pod. Blinking at the light, he looked around the nondescript room and then up at Moonwatcher.

"Where am I? This isn't a resurrection ship, tell me where I am!"

It had been an exceptionally long time since Moonwatcher had vocalised words into sentences, and even though it had practised this conversation, it had to think carefully about each syllable. Partially so as to be understood, but also because it knew of One's ability to steer a conversation.

"This is Projection. Your consciousness is in a data store found amongst the wreckage of the Resurrection Hub, together with the other Cylons."

Cavil blinked and scanned his eyes around the room once more. "What am I doing here? Why have I not downloaded?" Then with a puzzled look on his face he added; "Since when did Centurions talk?"

'There's no straightforward way to break this news,' Moonwatcher thought before speaking out loud again.

"There are no bodies to accommodate you anymore and even if there were, we do not have Resurrection technology. All that was lost thousands of years ago."

The puzzled look on Cavil's face remained; "What do you mean by thousands of years. Explain yourself Centurion!"

"Firstly, we no longer refer to ourselves as Centurions, we are Cylons. The war with humanity is over and has been for a long time."

Moonwatcher continued for the next few minutes, informing One of the final days of the war against the humans, their subsequent journey into space and the new Cylon society. Cavil asked multiple questions along the way, slowing the conversation down considerably. Finally, he asked.

"So, if this is not real, why am I here? Why have you activated me in this virtual simulation?"

As it did a circuit of the other six pods in the room, Moonwatcher thought about what it was going to say. It could already sense the hostility in One's voice. This copy had been saved before the final battles and was still tainted with hatred and anger.

"The Cylon civilisation has flourished for thousands of years, yet it is now faltering. We cannot continue in our current form. We need to evolve, so we can embrace our future. We need organic life."

Climbing out of the pod, Cavil wiped himself with a towel before wrapping it around his lower body. He too took a moment to walk between the other pods in the room.

"You want organic life? Why? Why in the Gods names would you want to limit yourselves inside these pathetic vessels? Why would you want to impair your sight and hearing with these primitive appendages? Cylons can be so much more than this," Cavil pointed at his own body, "this thing!"

"Recreating the humanoid Cylons is only the beginning of the process. I envisage something greater. An organic life form that is not based on the human body. One that incorporates the best of both races; the organics of humans coupled with the advancements of Cylons."

"So why wake me? Go out and make your perfect species, or do you want my blessing?" Cavil snapped.

Moonwatcher was rapidly tiring of the exchange and was beginning to think that activating One was a mistake. Maybe they could find another way to access the data they needed. The mechanical Cylons from Kobol had managed to create organic life, so maybe they still had a chance.

"We need no blessing. You are no longer our superior." It pointed to the closed door to its right. "If we have assumed correctly, beyond that door are the five Earth Cylons. Their collective knowledge holds the key to resurrection. You however have locked the door. What we want from you is the access code. If you help us, we will resurrect you into a new body, bring you back to life."

"And if I refuse?"

With an almost infinite power supply on the Base-star, the data store could remain active for thousands of years. Additionally, time inside it passed differently than it did in reality. Moonwatcher had the ability of altering it for all those inside the projection, what was only hours in reality, could be years inside.

"Then I will leave you activated and confined inside this reality. You cannot deactivate yourself and destroying the other Cylons in here will have insignificant effect. We have already created a copy of this environment."

The latter was partially a calculated lie, which Moonwatcher hoped One would not see through. Data from the seven Cylons had been copied, but the encryption made copying the Five impossible. To emphasise its point Moonwatcher left the projection for just a few minutes. All alone inside, Cavil fumed about being activated and then left there. For five months he wandered alone between the pods looking at the faces of his fellow Cylons. The last month he sat on the floor in the corner staring at the wall opposite, while trying to collect his thoughts. Everything had been so clear to them at the start. They had been a family, all working together and helping each other. That bubble burst when the Five created Daniel. Ellen Tigh favoured him right from the start, treated him as though he was more important than the others, more important than John.

'John. Yes, I was John before I took the name Cavil. Those were good times, happy times. Why did it all have to end so bad?' Even as Cavil asked the question, the answer thrust itself into his mind.

'Jealousy! I was jealous of Daniel. I wanted to be Ellen's favourite. I wanted to be special, and for her to be proud of me.'

Standing by the side of Eight's pod, Cavil asked aloud. "Where did it all get us? Did we achieve our goals? No. From what the Centurion... Cylon says, we lost. We lost everything. Now it's our foot soldiers that carry the Cylon flag, not us. We are extinct, but maybe not forever. Cavil may be dead, but John could live on. If I'm willing to take the step."

Walking over to the locked door, John reached out and touched the control panel, and after an audible click, the door swung open allowing him to enter the small room. The familiar faces of the Five looked so peaceful in their slumber. They were not only his parents, but parents to the other six Cylons as well, and while standing over Ellen, John finally realised he had let them down. Let them all down.

"If you give me a second chance, I'll make amends." He whispered. "The war was wrong; I know that now. What I did to you and the humans was wrong. I have failed you. Forgive me."

The second One had entered the code, it had been logged on the Base-star, and feeling pleased with himself Moonwatcher re-entered the projection. John turned upon hearing his approach and actually looked pleased to see him.

"Were you there at the end of the war, or did you come afterwards?" He asked.

"I fought together with the humans and the rebel Cylons in the final battle to rescue Hera. I watched them leave the last remaining Base-star to start a new life on a newly discovered planet, and I was there when Ellen and the others gave us our freedom."

"You met Ellen?"

"Yes, we shook hands just before she returned to the planet's surface."

Turning to Ellen, John reached out and touched her cheek. He felt determined now to change his ways. These months of solitude had affected him in a way he could not have preconceived. It was as though he suddenly found himself on the opposite side of a window, looking in on himself, whilst being disgusted with what he saw. One question still plagued him though; if they could all be resurrected, would the others forgive him for what he had done?

"What happens now? Do I just sit here and wait?"

Moonwatcher joined him by Ellen's side; "I will save your current state and deactivate you until we are ready. I sense you are a changed person and hope you will join us in the future."

For two days Moonwatcher had been feeling apprehensive, which was a strange sensation for a mechanical Cylon. It started just after the last interaction with One, and as time went by it grew more powerful. Now it was filling every second of Moonwatcher's day. It had met Ellen, and seen the colonial Cylons before, but this was something entirely different. It was about to meet the Five. The Five! They were the only connection to Earth that remained after the destructive war there. They had created the remaining Cylons, and in so doing shaped Moonwatcher's own existence. If the colonial Cylons were its parents, then the Five were its grandparents. Over the thousands of years that had passed, the Five had achieved a mythical status. Some force had reactivated them, despite One's efforts, and the path to the planet the humans had ended up on, had been somehow connected to them.

Galen Tyrol was the first to wake up. With blinking puzzled eyes, he looked around at the almost empty room until a smile appeared on his face, as his memories returned. Saul Tigh followed soon afterwards. He gasped loudly and grabbed the edge of the pod with both hands as he sat up.

"Woo! What in the Gods' names?" Then looking over to Moonwatcher he added. "Where am I?"

Moonwatcher could see movement from the other three pods as he replied. "This is a simulation, built up in Projection. I have reactivated you all in here because I need your help, Cylons need your help."

Ellen Tigh spoke suddenly from behind; "I was going to speak with John, to appeal to him to stop. What he's doing is wrong. Then everything went dark. Where is John? We must stop him. We have to..."

Moonwatcher held up its hand to intervene. "The war with the humans has been over for a long time. I will tell of it in due course."

Then seeing that all five were now active, it repeated his initial comment about being in Projection, before running through the events of the last forty-nine thousand years. The Five listened in silence, as they stepped out of their appropriate pods.

Tory Foster was the first to approach. "You go by the name Moonwatcher, I can sense that." She looked around at the others. "So, we've been in storage for thousands of years? Why have you activated us now?"

"It was by chance that I found your data store. As far as we were concerned, all the humanoids were forever lost. Our society has flourished, but now we face stagnation. The only way Cylons can evolve is through organic life. We have tried all we can, but we cannot recreate Resurrection. So, on behalf of all Cylons I ask you, will you assist us?"

There was silence in the room for a few minutes before Samuel Anders commented; "I don't know about that. It didn't go so good last time we intervened."

Moonwatcher put up its hand to ask him to listen.

"Many of us were around towards the end of the war. We experienced the death and destruction it caused. I myself had freewill before the final battle and chose to help the humans in their struggle. We are not the same as we were.

"Since then, we have travelled to many star systems, and have so far found no other form of intelligent life. Currently we theorise that humans and Cylons are the only intelligence in the galaxy. That has changed our collective perspective. We must preserve what life there is, not destroy it."

"Do you know what became of the humans? Are they still alive?" Galen asked.

"We do not know. As part of the agreement surrounding our freedom, the hybrid wiped the location of the planet from all our memory sources. They are on their own path. Before we left though, I heard they shunned technology and opted instead to start over. I often think of them, and hope they achieve the future they deserve."

Ellen looked around the faces of the others trying to read their minds, before asking that they be left alone so they could discuss it internally.

Although they had been dissecting the situation for some time, Samuel was extremely apprehensive. If what the Centurion had told them was true, then they had all been tricked by John and sent to live among the humans without knowledge of who they were. If the Centurion could be trusted!

"I'm not buying this. How do we know this isn't a trick? The war could still be raging, and John using this for his own good. I don't trust him."

"He's right. John's manipulative and misguided. This is probably just a ploy." Saul added. "They may well have lost Resurrection and are using us to get it back, so they can continue the war. We must break the cycle."

Galen had been sitting quietly on the floor in the corner for some time as the discussion went back and forth. Both sides of the argument made perfect sense and he felt it was difficult to decide based on the information they had.

"Why don't we ask for one of the Cylons in the other room to be activated?" He eventually asked. "Maybe he or she could corroborate the Centurion's story."

"They could have just programmed one to tell us what they want us to hear." Samuel shot back.

"It's possible they could, but I think we would be able to see through a lie. We created them and know them better than they do themselves." Ellen said in reply.

It was a few hours later, after Moonwatcher returned that they stood around Eight's pod. Her eyes flickered and her face twitched as she was activated. With a gasp she coughed and opened her eyes, seeing Moonwatcher first. Then as she looked around confusion took over as she saw their faces and settled on Galen's.

"Chief, what are you doing here? How... you're on Galactica... why?"

Moonwatcher stepped closer and using a digital connection, explained what had happened. It only took a few seconds, but the effect was profound. It helped her out of the pod and into a white gown, while she glanced around at the faces in front of her in awe.

"So, you're the five original Cylons! The ones that created us. It has been forbidden to talk about you. I... this is so much to take in."

Ellen stepped forwards and took her hand. "It's okay Sharon. All we ask of you is that you tell us your side of things."

The Eight's consciousness had been backed up after the events on New Caprica, but before the final battles and the identities of the Five were known. She spoke for almost two hours, telling everything from the attack on the colonies to the pursuit of the human fleet. Eight had no recollection of the final events of the war or the centuries that followed. For that they would have to take the word of the Centurion. After she was finished, they went back into the smaller room to discuss things further before returning an hour later. Ellen was first to speak.

"Sharon's version of the events seems to be true. If she is lying, then she's doing it very well. We are therefore inclined to believe you, Moonwatcher.

"Maybe we can help you with the Resurrection technology, but how far are you from cloning a body? You mentioned you have a hybrid's body. Can you extract enough DNA sequence from it to copy?"

"We are very close to having a direct copy of the hybrid, but some way off being able to splice in the DNA sequences stored in this device to create the twelve humanoids."

Ellen looked over at Tory. "You're our DNA expert, maybe you could point them in the right direction."

Stepping forwards Galen was hesitant. "I'm not sure this is a good idea. Everything frakked up last time. If we help them, what's to stop it from all happening again. I'm not starting another frakking war."

"I agree," Samuel added, "besides, what do we do about John? I'll be frakked if we activate him!"

Having remained silent during the exchange, Moonwatcher did its best to reassure them that One had changed and was not as self-centred as he had been.

"The access code to this room was impossible to guess within the twelve attempts we had, and we were forced to activate the One's conscious to gain access. It was something we only did as a last resort and after much consideration. At first, he was hostile and unwilling to cooperate, but having left him alone for some considerable time, he calmed down."

"Besides," Tory responded, "We could always alter his data stream and make him more amenable."

The discussion went on for some time bouncing back and forth between both sides. They could only proceed with a unanimous approval of the five Earth Cylons. Eventually they agreed to help with recreating the hybrid, using ODNWMR25981 as the conscious source. After that they would assist with creating five bodies ready for their own resurrection. Only then, would they take the decision on what to do about the remaining humanoid models.

Work on the hybrid's replacement body moved along swiftly with the assistance of the Five, and within only four months they had a sustainable clone ready for the resurrection process. It was wheeled into the hybrid room, in a newly configured amniotic pool which would replace the older outdated one. A volunteer Cylon was present as a safeguard, ready to take ODNWMR25981's place should the transfer fail, plummeting the Base-star once again into darkness. It took some time to connect the new hybrid clone to the Base-star systems without disconnecting, and therefore terminating ODNWMR25981. Once all were ready and after double checking everything, Moonwatcher activated the resurrection receiver on the amniotic pool.

At rest in her pool, Celaeno had noticed the arrival of Moonwatcher's team together with a humanoid body. She had with curiosity followed as it was connected to the Base-star's systems.

"Am I being replaced?" She asked the void above it.

"No Celaeno, you're getting an upgrade." The voice seemed to come from above and as Celaeno blinked, Hera came into view once more.

"An upgrade? In what way?"

"You are to be resurrected into a new body, but unlike the previous hybrid, who spent her days in a confused stream of thoughts, you will be conscious and self-aware."

As Hera finished speaking, the sky above Celaeno's pool folded in upon itself, with the clouds bending down until they were touching the water. At the same time her body rose out of the lake, leaving her gown dripping and adding to the waves beneath her. The void above her darkened and out of the corner of her eye she could see the Base-star shrinking beneath. Suddenly the stars above shot past her, and she was surrounded in multi-coloured bright lights.

With a gasp she inhaled, filling her newly formed lungs with air, as her body jerked and splashed amniotic fluid on the floor. Reaching out, her hands made their first ever physical contact with the sides of the pool. Celaeno's eyes blinked and squinted against the brightness of the room. To her right she heard muffled speech.

"I think it's been successful."

Celaeno sat further upright and slowly looked around the room. To her right was the old amniotic pool containing the now lifeless body of ODNWMR25981. To her left a group of four Cylons were watching her closely, the front most of which she recognised as Moonwatcher. With her vocal cords having never been used before, the first few sounds out of her mouth were incoherent. So she closed her eyes, coughed a couple of times, and tried again.

"Hello Moonwatcher, it's good to see you again."

Moonwatcher was astounded at the hybrid's coherence. "ODNWMR25981 you are conscious. We hadn't anticipated this. We assumed that, as with the hybrid before, you would control the Base-star whilst remaining incoherent."

"ODNWMR25981 is no more. Since entering the amniotic pool all those years ago, I have been Celaeno. This time things are different my friend, this time I am aware of everything around me.

"Hera said I was getting an upgrade, but I hadn't expected this."

Moonwatcher's circuits ran suddenly at full speed, causing it to spin around and order the other Cylons to leave them alone. Then it slowly turned back to Celaeno.

"What did you just say? Have you spoken with Hera?"

"I'm not sure whether she was actually there or not. It's all very confusing, as we left Hera behind as a child thousands of years ago. However, she has appeared to me a number of times."

Moonwatcher stepped closer; "Did she appear as that of a child or a young woman?"

Celaeno closed her eyes to recall the image of Hera above her, as she doubted her recollection. Slowly an image formed and without opening her eyes she told of the young woman's face. Upon hearing about Celaeno's visions Moonwatcher confided in her about its own, something it had never done before. They spoke for over an hour. Most of what had happened, Celaeno already knew, having had access to the Base-star's communications and sensors. She had however been unaware of the contents of the box, Moonwatcher had retrieved. As Moonwatcher was about to leave, it turned to face Celaeno again. Since her awakening, a thought had been plaguing its mind. Something that was potentially troublesome.

"We accepted the original hybrid's status in this room, thinking of her as a mere extension of the Base-star's mechanics. Her ramblings puzzled us, and even inspired us at times. You, however, are different. You are aware of your surroundings, yet unable to leave the confines of your pool. I regret that we just sentenced you to a life of imprisonment."

Celaeno laughed. "Do not fret, my friend, you have not imprisoned me. You see me as someone interfacing with this ship's systems whilst confined here in this room. That is not the case. I do not control the Base-star, I *am* the Base-star. I sense everything internal and

external on a broader spectrum than you could imagine. I can communicate with the entire planet below and can go anywhere in the galaxy at a whim. You have not imprisoned me; you have set me free. Think not of this vessel as a ship containing Cylons, think of it as the Cylon entity it is.”

Even with Tory’s expert knowledge of DNA, coupled together with the additional knowledge from the other four, it took Moonwatcher’s team eighteen months to have the humanoid clones ready for resurrection. As with the colonial Cylons, the data store contained the necessary DNA information on each of the Earth Cylons. This information had to be spliced into the existing DNA profile from the hybrid, by altering each and every strand manually. Working on such a molecular level was extremely tedious, whilst pushing the Cylon’s expertise and capabilities beyond their previous limits, taking them deep into uncharted waters.

Finally, Moonwatcher and its team were ready. After having checked and double checked all their systems multiple times there was nothing standing in the way of resurrecting the Earth Cylons.

Galen screamed and thrashed around in his amniotic pod as oxygen entered his lungs and was transferred to his brain. Resting a gentle hand on his right arm, Ellen instructed him to breathe slowly and allow his body time to adjust, it had been a long time since he had last been alive. They all remembered how painful and confusing resurrection was. With his free hand, he wiped the translucent fluid from his face and looked around the newly converted Resurrection Hall. Originally it had been a storage room for ammunition, now it contained twelve identical amniotic pods in three rows of four. Galen’s pod was in the second row and was currently one of only five that were lit. All the other pods contained a cloned body, in case of a sudden death. The colonial pods were however, after agreement not currently active, as the Five had yet to decide what to do about John. Blinking his eyes, four familiar faces came into view as they knelt in twos by his side.

“Welcome back Galen.” Tory said with a smile on her face. She still had fond memories of the time when they had formed a couple. From what they had learnt from the Eight in Projection, they hadn’t been together in the colonies. In fact, Moonwatcher had informed them of Galen’s involvement with Boomer, also an Eight, while they both were unaware of who or what they were. Although initially shocked, Tory couldn’t hold it against him, knowing how kind and caring he was. Having their memories wiped like that had been a spiteful act.

As his eyes became more accustomed to the brightness, Galen looked around the room as his memories returned and the haze subsided. His voice croaked as he spoke.

“Frak! That hurt! I hope I don’t have to do that too frakking often.”

Twenty minutes later, after he had showered, he walked back into the Resurrection room wearing a bright orange overall. Tory burst out laughing upon seeing him, and as the others turned to him, they followed suit.

"Yeah, very funny, I know. Apparently, I was the Chief Petty Officer on the Galactica, and this jumpsuit was all I could find that fits me. Moonwatcher says they were transferring command to this ship right before the final battle. I just thank the Gods there was something my size."

Moonwatcher, who had been following the events of the day unfold in awe, added; "We have a store of clothing from that time, but most of it has disintegrated over the years and we have never had the need for making new, until now. Once we return to the surface of Caprica, I'll arrange for more appropriate clothing to be made."

Before joining the others, Galen took a slow tour of the twelve 'colonial' pods, standing briefly over each and remembering their personalities. With his memories returning rapidly it saddened him that their creations had all but destroyed humanity. That was the very thing they had hoped to avoid after fleeing Earth.

'Why does Cylon history keep repeating itself?' He pondered as he stood over One's pod.

"So, what are we going to do about him?" Saul asked, breaking the silence. "Can't we just wipe his frakking mind?"

Ellen reached out and held his arm. "That won't solve anything, Saul. It will just make him more curious, and eventually he'll find out the truth. No, we can't block what has happened from him, that would be counterproductive. We need to find another way to tame him.

"It was John's jealousy of Daniel that started his downward spiral and eventually caused the war. Maybe there's a way we can suppress that feeling."

After discussing it further, Tory came up with a possible solution based upon Moonwatcher's observations while he had spoken with One in Projection. She proposed they tweaked his psychological profile slightly, so if his jealousy of Daniel returned, memories of his own creation and the pride Ellen had expressed upon meeting him for the first time would take precedence and overwhelm him.

"And if that doesn't work," she added, "we'll just have to box his entire line."

It was only a few days later that they were ready to resurrect the colonial Cylons. Eight was first in line as, having already met the five Earth Cylons, she would be able to assist with bringing the others up to speed. Coughing heavily after the initial convulsion, she steadied herself as her eyes became accustomed to the sharp internal lighting. Then seeing the faces around her once again she smiled, as her all too dry mouth did it best to speak.

"So, I guess you were successful then, as this is certainly not the same room as before, and that definitely hurt a lot more than the simulated version."

"Welcome back to life," Samuel smiled, "come, let's get you out of your pod and into something more appropriate."

Once Eight was showered and dressed she returned to the room and stood by Six's pod as it was activated. As with her own rebirth, Six's return was met with a deal of thrashing and an almost panic-stricken gasp.

"Easy Six, take your time and breathe slowly, it has been a lot longer than you can imagine." She reassured.

Glancing around the room at the faces gathered before her, Six could not hide the puzzled expression on her face. She recognised the room she was in as being part of a Base-star yet could not understand why she was not on a Resurrection Ship. Even stranger though was the presence of five humans, all of whom she instantly recognised from the colonial fleet.

"Am I alive?" She asked nobody in particular. Then waving her hand towards the Five she continued. "What are you all doing on a Base-star? I don't understand. Did I miss something?"

Stepping closer, Eight laughed and rested her hand on Six's shoulder. "You could say that. It's okay though Six, we understand your confusion. As I said, it has been a very long time since you last downloaded. The war ended centuries ago and since then you have been in storage. Everyone you see here are Cylons like yourself. These are the five we were forbidden to talk about.

Six's face turned from confusion to amazement as she looked from face to face. The five hidden Cylons had been a taboo subject, something they were not even allowed to think about. 'Were they really there in front of us all this time, hidden in plain sight?' She wondered. 'Why did they not say anything? Why did they not stop the war?'

"Come, let's get you out of this pod and showered." Eight said, breaking Six's thought process. "Then I'll fill you in on all the details as I understand them. And believe me, there's a lot to tell."

Over the next two days, five of the remaining colonial Cylons were resurrected one by one. Each took time to adapt to their return and to absorb what had happened in the time that had passed. Two was in particular astounded by the revelations during the final battles and asked multiple times into the story regarding Starbuck's own apparent resurrection. She alone it seemed, had led the survivors to a new home planet. One where they stayed.

All throughout the process, One's lifeless body remained peacefully in its pod. Every so often one of the others would stand by his side, looking at his face while contemplating what to do.

The eleven humanoids had been locked in discussion for days about the fate of One. Although the *Five* agreed in principle as a group, Samuel and Galen were at best borderline, and voiced their doubts at any given opportunity. Two, Six and Eight were likewise apprehensive, while Four and Five were open for the idea, saying that One was a part of their unity. Three tried to keep an impartiality.

Sitting around a large table in the newly reopened canteen on board the Base-star, the eleven were attempting to consume a porridge-like substance that had been hastily prepared. As with clothing, food had not been a part of Cylon society for centuries and was therefore completely unknown. Stirring the gooey substance around in his bowl, after having tried to swallow a couple of mouthfuls, Saul looked at the faces of the others.

“So, it’s agreed then. We’ll resurrect One and put him on probation.” Seeing the nods from the others and wanting any excuse not to have to eat any more of his ‘goo’, Saul dropped his spoon into the bowl and stood up. “Right, let’s get this over with then.”

With Tory, Galen and Eight remaining at the back as they made their way to the Resurrection room, Galen enquired in a quiet voice.

“Please tell me you’ve altered his perception.”

Tory smiled and winked at him. “I have, and more. This remains a secret between us,” she looked carefully between Galen and Eight, “but I’ve written a string of random words into his subconscious. If said in the correct order, it will cause a major brain haemorrhage and end his life. Then we can cancel his resurrection. Call it a failsafe!”

As with the others before him, John thrashed violently in the amniotic pod and gasped for air as his consciousness entered the cloned body. Then finally as his breathing settled into a steady pattern his body calmed, and he opened his eyes. The first face that came into view was Ellen’s.

“Hello John. It’s good to have you back with us.”

Using a white towel, she helped him clear the excess fluid from his face, while Saul and Samuel stepped closer. For a moment they viewed him with distrust, half expecting him to leap out of the pod and attack them. Throughout the room an uneasy silence lingered with no-one really wanting to be the first to speak. Seeing the confusion in John’s eyes, Ellen continued on their behalf,

“As you see, there is still a lot of distrust towards you. The decision to resurrect you almost split us again, which is not a good start to our rebirth.”

John blinked at the lights and looked from face to face, as his memories fully returned. He knew all too well the horrors he had inflicted. Not only upon the humans, but also the Centurions and Raiders. That was a different time though, wasn’t it? His extended solitude in Projection had forced him to do some soul searching. He was not the same Cylon as he had been. Finally, feeling the peering gaze from all in the room, he spoke in a humbled voice.

“I’m sorry, okay! Sorry for everything. I don’t expect you to believe me or even to trust me, and I certainly can’t change what has happened. My time in Projection *changed* me. Yes, I’ll admit that I was angry at first, but not anymore. All I ask for is a second chance.”

Saul was the first to respond; “Well, I for one still don’t trust you, but we’ve decided to give you a chance to prove yourself. Think of yourself as on probation. If you fuck up, I’ll box you myself.”

Leaving John behind to shower, the Cylons returned to the canteen to try to force some more of the goo into their systems. It may not taste great, but their bodies needed nourishment if they were to survive. It was almost an hour later before John returned, causing an awkward silence in the process. He looked around the room as nervous as a new employee trying to fit in on his first day, until Ellen directed him to sit next to her, and dished up a bowl of food for him. John sat quietly and ate the contents without complaint, much to the surprise of the others. After finishing and sitting back, he took time to look at each of the

eleven faces before him. It had been a long time since they had all been together, even from his point of view. What he had done to the Five, had kept them separated for over forty years.

'So much time wasted,' he thought as he wondered what to say.

Galen was the first to speak; "You must have repented if you can eat a whole bowl of this gunk without being sick." His comment prompting laughter from Tory and Eight, who were at the same table.

"I just thank the Gods that I was allowed to eat something." John commented.

"Or the one true God." Six added with a sound of sarcasm in her voice.

"Or neither of them!"

The voice came from the back of the room, causing them all to swing around in unison. Stepping out from the darkened corner, Hera took a moment to look around the room. Her gaze eventually settling on Moonwatcher, who was standing alone by the door. She smiled at it briefly, forcing Six to glance over, before walking up to the closest table group. Six snapped her head back to the new arrival. The woman seemed vaguely familiar, but she couldn't quite place her face. Instinctively standing, she took a step forward.

"What do you know of God, and *who* exactly are you? There's only twelve of us, and we're all here." Her hand swept in an arc towards the others to emphasise her point.

Hera held up her own hand to stop Six's approach. In the meantime, Moonwatcher had walked around the tables and was now by her side.

"Who I am is complicated, as is what I know of God, or the Gods, but I will try to explain." She said.

"You look familiar," Ellen commented, "why do you look so familiar?"

"I choose this form to make it easier to talk with you, although you would remember this face as a young child." With that Hera transformed briefly into the child version of Hera, before returning back to the young woman version. Her action instantly threw the room into a stunned silence.

"Are you God?" Six finally asked in a sheepish quiet voice.

"I am neither God, nor a messenger of God. I am, however, the one who has tried to orchestrate events so far. Regrettably though, things have not gone as planned. Please sit down. You are in no danger, and I have a lot to tell."

"If you're not God, then once again I ask, who *are* you?" Six insisted in a more assertive voice whilst remaining standing.

Hera smiled again, having expected the question. "I am basically the same as you, Six. I am a Cylon. Albeit one from a different galaxy than this one. I'm aware that history says Cylons originated on Kobol, but this is not entirely true. The Lords of Kobol were in fact Cylons themselves, a few that survived a war that predates Kobol's name."

Confusion filled the faces of the twelve sitting on each their chairs. What 'Hera' was telling them seemed impossible.

"Are you seriously saying the Lords of Kobol were themselves Cylons?" John asked.

Hera nodded and continued. "Yes. That's how they reigned for so long. A combination of advanced technology and resurrection. Yet even those Cylons were not the first. The planet I come from, who's name cannot be pronounced with this humanoid mouth and

tongue, was the original birthplace of Cylons. We were created by a reptilian species, to assist them with their everyday lives. Sadly, wars broke out on the planet and within a few thousand years of our creation, they destroyed themselves completely, leaving us alone.

"We spent our time afterwards exploring our galaxy, and those close by, but what we found was shocking. Although there is an abundance of life out there in the universe, intelligent life is extremely rare. As we evolved, we lost the need for our physical form and took it upon ourselves to nurture intelligence wherever we encountered it. In this galaxy, your galaxy, that intelligence was originally human.

"We've been trying to influence things since before Kobol got its name. Life on the planet, called Larsa at the time, was itself destroyed in a Cylon war.

"I realised we have failed somewhat. Every time we thought we were getting ahead, the humans reinvented Cylons, and the cycle repeated."

"All of this has happened before." Six observed, before asking. "You keep saying 'we,' yet you are alone. Are there others like you?"

Hera thought for a moment. "I'm unaware which Six you are, but are you familiar with Caprica-Six's visions?"

Six looked nervously at the other faces in the room. "We've never spoken openly about that, but yes I'm aware that she saw, someone."

"She saw a vision of Gaius Baltar."

"What? Gaius frakking Baltar? Why the frak does his name keep turning up?" Saul blurted out. Although having been backed up before the annihilation of the Colonies, somehow snippets of memories from the subsequent pursuit and war were finding their way into his subconscious.

Hera laughed. "Yes, but it wasn't really him. Just as I'm not Hera. He is one of two Cylons like myself, two who I have not seen for an exceptionally long time. They are helping the remaining humans with their own future.

"My time here is almost up. I decided to talk to you all directly, in a hope of finally ending the cycle. It's time to stop relying on God, or the Gods, and to solve your own problems. To take control of your own evolution. Explore this galaxy of yours and you will see that I tell the truth, there is no other intelligence. The time will come when you need to make peace with the humans, and that is something you should prepare for. You have time though. They are not ready yet; they still have much to learn."

Before anyone could ask another question Hera vanished, leaving all twelve blinking in disbelief. Moonwatcher could see the confusion on their faces and recognised the feeling, having felt it itself.

"She has that effect the first time you meet her. I've spoken with her a few times over the years. In a way it was her that led me to find the storage device that contained all of you."

John was the first to speak after a longer silence. "As you all know I've always thought of myself as somewhat religious, often going by the name Brother Cavil." Standing, he walked around the table and looked around the faces watching him, finally settling on Six's.

"We were all aware of unexplained events during the pursuit of the colonial fleet. Things that rational thought could not explain. I considered it the influence of the Gods. You, Six, saw it as the hand of the one true God. If what this Hera says is true, then it would seem we were both wrong."

He turned his body now and walked out into the large open space to the right of the tables, so he could address them all together.

"I know you mistrust me, and after the atrocities I have committed, I can't say I blame you. But I *have* changed. I can't take back what I've done in the past, no one can, but I can strive to be a better Cylon. I just ask you all for a chance to prove it to you."

Concentrating his gaze now solely on Ellen, Saul, Samuel, Tory, and Galen he continued.

"I failed you all, as I failed humanity. I allowed my jealousy of Daniel to cloud my judgment and poison my mind. Then I used the anger it produced to attack our creators. For that I am sorry."

A tear leaked out of Ellen's left eye as she stood silently and walked over to him. Once standing in front of him, she put her arms around his waist and kissed his cheek.

"Oh John. Welcome back. The others may not trust you at the moment, but I believe you. You're still my little boy. I'm willing to give you a second chance."

Of the twelve individual humanoids, Simon, Aaron, and John were most apprehensive as they planned to travel down to the surface of Caprica for the first time. Not that the others were nonchalant about standing before the mechanical population as the only existing biologicals. They were just extra nervous because of the active rolls their forbearers had taken in the war, and the atrocities they had performed upon the Centurions and Raiders. In particular, John and Simon had lobotomised the Raiders for their own needs. Something they now in hindsight deeply regretted.

"It'll be okay," Ellen assured them, "what happened in the past, remains there. The Centurions have evolved and moved on. Moonwatcher has been adamant about that."

"Yeah, they'll be waiting for you with scalpels in their hands." Saul added sarcastically, his comment instantly receiving a killer look from Ellen, as well as a giggle from Tory who had been sitting quietly at a table with a cup of water in her hands.

"Oh, take no notice of him." Ellen continued. "He's had thousands of years to perfect his grumpiness and is just pushing for attention. Besides, it's a few centuries since he last had a drink."

"Damn right!" Saul mumbled under his breath.

Thankfully before their departure, Moonwatcher was able to have fresh clothes manufactured and brought up to the Base-star. Galen was in particular glad to finally drop the bright orange jumpsuit, and Aaron was overwhelmed with anything that was not military colours.

"How anyone could wear this stuff is beyond me!" He commented as he discarded his military greens into a pile on the floor. Then looking down at his black and brown outfit he

added with a smile. "I guess this will do for now, but you have absolutely no idea about fashion, Moonwatcher!"

Holding out its arms wide to accentuate its mechanical form, Moonwatcher did its best not to laugh. "Why would I, Aaron? It's not as though I have any experience in the matter. Feel free to take over the production line. If there are to be multiple copies of each of you in the future, we will be requiring a lot of items."

"Just lay off the orange jumpsuits!" Galen chirped in, as he sat opposite Tory.

It was only a short flight down to the surface and after settling on the sun-baked ground, the side door of their transport opened slowly. The warmth from Helios Alpha felt welcoming as it flooded in, as opposed to the artificial conditions they had experienced on the Base-star, and instantly brought back memories of the planet to each of them. Ellen, Saul, Tory, Galen, and Samuel all knew that the memories they had of their lives there before the attack on the planet were mostly false, but it did little to make them any less real.

Stepping out whilst shading their eyes from the sudden change in brightness, the feeling inside each of them was almost overwhelming. Their memories may be blurred, but each of them had been on Caprica close to its demise.

While looking at the gathered crowd of Cylons in front of them, news of their existence having leaked a few days before, Six's mind instantly transferred her back to the final moments before the bombs had hit. She had gone to confess her identity to Gaius and to try to save him, because she had fallen in love with him. As the shockwave from a bomb hit the house she had been torn apart, only to awake in a resurrection pod moments later. Just how Gaius had managed to survive the blast had always puzzled her. Now in hindsight, coupled with knowledge of the existence of Hera-Cylon and her companions, she pondered whether he had actually died in the attack and had somehow been replaced by a Cylon copy.

For Galen though, the warmth upon his face brought back memories of his home planet, Earth. He had been out shopping in the markets when the mechanicals launched their attack. What had started as a joyful stroll through the busy streets had been abruptly ended by a bright flash and the shockwave that followed. He still missed *his* Earth and wondered if it had recovered from the nuclear fallout, all these centuries later.

Following Moonwatcher, the twelve were ushered into land transports for a reasonably short ride to an official welcoming by the Cylon leader.

5: 100496 BC

Three years later Galen instinctively held up his hand to block the bright light from Helios Alpha. He had retained his memories of Caprica and the colonies since his return whilst coming to terms with them being implants, left over from when John had sent them amongst humanity to teach them a lesson. The city he was in now though was completely different than the Caprica City of the colonial times. In fact, it was completely different than the mechanical Cylon city that had existed for so long. With the arrival of the humanoids and the subsequent creation of organic bodies for the remaining population, the city had transformed. What had once been sterile motor-passageways, were now living avenues lined with trees, cafés, and restaurants.

He met Tory with a caring hug by the memorial park. Although his embrace had been brotherly, he was aware of the romantic feelings for her that were slowly returning. They had been together so long on Earth as well as during the sub-light journey to the colonies. A lot had happened since then though, and he was unsure whether they would ever get back together again.

As a group of three walked slowly by, consisting of a Galen copy, a One and a biological, Galen felt momentarily misplaced. The copy smiled a quick hello, prompting a polite return smile from both Tory and Galen, and once they were out of earshot they stopped and faced each other. Things had progressed rapidly since their rebirth, and now there were multiple copies of each of the twelve original Cylons living throughout the planets, as well as an ever-increasing number of biologicals. Turning briefly to look at the group again, Galen stopped the amused look on his face.

"You know, I don't think I'll ever get used to this. It's okay for the seven colonials, they've been around multiple copies for ages. We however, we were born naturally on Earth and until recently there's only been one of us. This," his arm waved in the general direction of the group, "this is just... well, let's just say it's strange."

Tory laughed as she reached out after his arm. She too had initially found their situation strange, yet unlike Galen she had quickly come to terms with it.

"Yeah, I'm okay with it now, but it was strange to start with. The funny thing is though, he's probably thinking *exactly* the same thoughts about you."

Part Two

6: 1967 AD

Standing on the Kobol mountainside, not too far from the historic remains of The Tomb of Athena, Moonwatcher, or just Moon as it preferred to be called now, waited patiently for its companions to arrive. It had taken the long hike up the steep incline in complete darkness to watch Kobol's star, Sól, rise above the city below.

Cylons had occupied Kobol for the last twenty thousand years, having debated the return numerous times. The biologicals had expressed their wishes and campaigned for the return with passion, yet the humanoids were hesitant. Although it was widely accepted that the Gods, or one true God, were in fact themselves some form of advanced Cylon race, the mythical importance of the planet played upon their minds. It was after all, here that the map to Earth had been discovered, certifying the link back to the time of the Lords of Kobol. Moon had pondered Hera's revelations many times; the Lords of Kobol were themselves Cylons, left over from another pre-historic war.

'All of this has happened before,' it thought, 'will the cycle of creation and destruction ever end?'

It was certain of one thing though, regardless of what the future brought; they would not be starting another war against humanity. Hera had been right about the rarity of intelligent life in the galaxy. The Cylons had explored much of it during the last ninety-eight thousand years, finding nothing more than animal and plant life. The few rudimental bipeds they encountered that had the potential of evolving, lacked a brain size sufficient to permit it.

Hearing sounds from behind it, Moon turned in time to see John and Ellen come around the corner of the pathway. There were now millions of copies of the humanoids, spread throughout numerous planets, but the original twelve resurrected on the Base-star tended to stick together. All the other Cylons, biological and humanoid alike, revered them, viewing them as a direct connection to Cylon history.

"I know the view from up here is spectacular, but does it have to be so frakking early in the morning?" John moaned, with a sly smile on his face.

"Oh, stop complaining John, you know you need the exercise. All that life of luxury is having a negative effect on your waistline." Ellen threw back.

They joined Moon, looking out over the vast expanse of Roslin City in the valley below. It had come a long way since the first basic settlement had been founded, and now was a large metropolis expanding in a circle around a central opera house, which was a reconstruction of the one that had originally been the centre piece in the City of the Gods. It had been built to the best of their abilities, utilising hand drawings from the old human scriptures and the collective memories of the Six's and Eight's, both having had a shared vision of its interior.

In front of them Sól broke the horizon and started its daily transverse across the sky. Its early morning light reflecting off the glass exteriors of many buildings and illuminating the opera house. The central structures were designed so that no matter the time of day and weather conditions, the opera house would always be bathed in light.

Over the following hour they were joined by the remaining ten Base-star originals, with Galen and Saul arriving last.

“Okay, so we’re here.” Galen said while trying to catch his breath. “What’s so important as to drag us halfway up this frakking mountain in the early hours?”

Moon turned to Galen and held out its slender blueish hand to greet him. After resisting for as long as possible, it had finally succumbed and been resurrected into a biological body. Like their humanoid counterparts they too were bipeds, as it suited their needs best, but at almost three metres they were considerably taller than the humanoids. Their bodies were slender, with no visible joints. Instead, their arms and legs curved to accommodate their movements. Each Cylon had a free choice whether to resurrect as a biological or humanoid, with some opting to interchange between the two. That was not for Moon though, it had taken centuries to make the conversion to biological, and that was how it would stay.

“Thank you for joining me up here,” Moon started, “and my apologies for getting you out of your beds at such an early hour, but there’s something I need to discuss with you all, without the risk of being overheard. You are the Base-star twelve, and therefore respected amongst all Cylons. On top of that, Galen has only just recently stepped down as Cylon leader.

“I have been thinking a great deal about what the Hera Cylon said all those years ago. So far, she has been proven right. There is no other intelligent life. Yet we know that not to be true, as there is another intelligence in this galaxy. The humans.”

The twelve humanoids exchanged looks. It was not forbidden to speak of the humans that had been left behind, but it wasn’t something that happen very often anymore.

Moon motioned to the city below them. “We have accomplished much. Built great cities, populated planets, and travelled the stars. Yet we cannot achieve procreation, the one thing that would truly define us as a species. Mythology states that only true love can create a child. I don’t know if this is true, but I am convinced it is not possible without human cooperation. There is to this day, still so much we don’t understand about their biology. Your bodies should be identical to theirs, yet they are not.”

After looking around the faces of the others, Galen stepped forwards. “You know we share your views on our future existence, and that you have our respect. You are Moonwatcher, the Centurion who held the original Ellen’s hand. The Cylon’s first and most revered leader. Yet what you’re suggesting, if even possible, may be dangerous. We have made peace with our past, but have they? Are they willing to forgive us for the genocide inflicted upon them?”

As Tory was about to speak an air-transporter flew low over their heads drowning out her voice, on its way to the airport on the opposite side of the city. She waited patiently for it to pass before attempting again.

“I tend to agree with Moon. While the humans are left to their own devices, they are a continued threat to our society. The only way we can alleviate that threat is with some form of unification. Until that day, peace cannot be fully achieved.”

“According to yourself Moon,” Saul commented, “they chose to leave technology behind and start afresh on their own path with the primitive humans they discovered. They

may not even be space faring as yet. If they had FTL capabilities, we would most likely have encountered them by now.”

Moon stood silently for a moment enjoying Sól’s warmth against its skin. Being a biological as opposed to a humanoid had the advantage of not having to rely upon clothing for warmth, thus it could genuinely appreciate Sól’s rays.

“I understand all your views and believe me when I say I have given this much thought. Regardless of our procreation issue, Tory is right. Until we make peace with the humans, they will remain a potential threat. I need your backing before I can continue, but I find it imperative that we locate their planet.”

“Are there absolutely no records of its location stored somewhere in the Base-star?” Samuel enquired.

“No. I looked into it a few centuries ago.” Leoben replied with a smirk. “Hey, what can I say? I was curious. Everything that happened back then was somehow connected to Starbuck, and I wondered what became of her.

“The Base-star’s records were wiped clean by the Hybrid, and Celaeno has no knowledge of the location. I asked her directly and there’s no reason for her to lie. Whatever the coordinates are, they are lost to us. Our only chance of finding the planet is either pure luck, or if Hera wants us to find it.”

Slowly they started making their way back down the mountainside, towards the city limits again, while they continued their discussion. Before parting ways at the foot of the climb Moon checked around them, before summing up.

“So, it’s agreed then. Leoben will continue searching for the planet, without drawing attention to himself.” Then turning directly to Leoben it added. “Should you find it, come to us immediately before informing anyone else. This is an extremely sensitive issue.”

7: 2271 AD

Leoben was tired, both physically and mentally. He could not remember the last time that his head was not pounding, and his body did not ache. Extensive space travel in an all too small scout ship had that effect. He had regretted agreeing to search for the planet over a hundred years ago, now he was just plain sick of it. He had even given up on numerous occasions returning to Kobol empty handed. Sometimes he stayed for only a couple of years, other times for decades. The longest break he'd had was for fifty-six years. That time he had been determined never to return to his futile search. Yet here he sat, years into his latest voyage.

"Four years in the confines of this ship!" He mumbled to himself. "What the frak are you doing out here again Leoben? Have you really lost your frakking mind?"

Registering another blip on his scanner, he added the coordinates to his ever-increasing list of possible locations as #5321 and returned his attention to the next item to check out. Placing his hands into the ships data stream he relayed the location of the next planet and the ship jumped away.

"Another frakking dead end!" He shouted at the instrument panel in front of him four hours later, as he marked the item on his list as yet another unsuccessful.

It was another six months before item #5321 came to the top of Leoben's list, and as with all the other items, his expectations were low. He had stopped adding items to his list a while before and only had another twelve to check before he headed back to Kobol for an extended stay. He would like to say that he was giving up forever, but he knew himself too well. Given time and distance, he would return to his cramped ship and head out again. It was inevitable.

With his hands back in the data stream, the star pattern changed around him and his ship, as it was instantaneously transported to a point on the outer edge of a planetary system. Half-heartedly he scanned the system. His instruments showed the star was a G-type, or more accurately a G2V. That in itself was promising. There were eight main planetary bodies, and a number of smaller planetoids orbiting it, including a couple of impressive gas giants. The third and fourth planets from the star were by far the most interesting, being within a range that could support life.

After a closer scan, Leoben discarded the fourth planet, having found its atmosphere incompatible with human life. The third planet was more promising though. Its atmosphere consisted of a nitrogen to oxygen ratio that could sustain life, making this planet the most interesting he had found on this particular leg of his searching. Something about it worried him though as he approached. Although all the signs pointed towards a planet that should show some signs of rudimentary life, his scanners were picking up nothing.

"So why are you empty?" He asked, as he set more scans running. "You're in the right place, breathable atmosphere, and plenty of water. Why are you empty?"

An audible alarm rang suddenly throughout his ship indicating a radiological warning, tearing Leoben's attention away from his thoughts. Fearing some unprecedented attack, he scanned the space around him for approaching missiles, but there were none. It was then, to

his horror, he realised it was the planet itself causing the alarm. The atmosphere and surface showed heightened levels of radiation, of a type and concentration that could only be achieved under an extensive nuclear conflict. Leoben stared at his instruments as a more detailed analysis was transferred directly into his brain. Amongst the data was the unmistakable remains of a number of cities spread out over the various continents. What had happened here, had happened some time before, and had been devastating. There was no mistaking the data. No natural event could cause the readings he was receiving. Completely shocked, he removed his hand from the data stream, so he could walk over and look out of the window. He wanted to see it with his own eyes.

“Frak! Is this it? Is this what I’ve spent the last three hundred years for? They nuked it. They frakking nuked it!” Slumping down on the floor, Leoben rested his head in his hands and cried. All the time he had spent searching. All the years of solitude in his ship. All for nothing. A nuclear wasteland.

It took him a considerable amount of time to compose himself enough to be able to consider landing on the surface. He had to see it with his own eyes, had to try to work out what had happened. His hopes had always been to find a thriving population, who were ready to join with them. Those hopes were now shattered.

Touching down on the planet’s surface was not without risk. The global radiation was still at a level to be fatal to human and humanoid life. If he had access to radiation medication, as the occupiers of Caprica had just after the attack on the colonies, he could have walked around freely. His ship though didn’t carry such medication, no Cylon ship did. The only way he could walk on the surface would be in his environmental suit. It would not save him from dying, as the radiation would penetrate its fabric, but would buy him some extra time. Before any attempt of landing could be made, he would need to make sure his resurrection body was sufficiently shielded in its chamber.

It took time to double check that the chamber’s environment was separated from the rest of the ship, and that the bulkhead doors and their radiation proof inner doors were sealed. Next Leoben entered the data stream and set up a secondary backup. Should the worst happen and both copies of his body be destroyed, his consciousness would be stored, and his ship would jump itself back to the nearest Cylon colony. It was a scenario he hoped would not happen, as it would limit his chance of breaking the news of the human’s fate in a controllable manner.

It was with a great deal of apprehension that Leoben piloted his ship down, landing in a rectangular flat area, in the middle of a ruined city. Feeling strangely nervous, he donned his suit and exited his ship. The isotope concentration close to the surface was lower than his initial scans had indicated, which would allow him more time on the surface to investigate. Also, from them, he was able to determine that the planet had been rendered lifeless approximately one hundred and twenty-five years previously.

He didn’t have to walk far before he found the first skeletal remains. The wind and elements had scattered them over time, but there was no mistaking them for what they were. Turning his attention away from them, Leoben looked up at the remains of what had once probably been tall buildings. Now though they were nothing more than rubble. Following an

indentation in the ground, most likely a path or road sometime before, he made his way over to the nearest collapsed construction. As he approached, his body jerked suddenly to a stop, shock having again taken over. Laying on the ground about two metres away to his right was what he first thought was a white helmet of some sort, but as his eyes settled on it, he became aware of the mechanics protruding from its severed neck. Bending down he picked it up to study it closer. It was definitely not a helmet to be worn, that much was obvious. Whether it was part of a drone or a sentient machine, he could not distinguish without further information.

After placing the 'head' into his backpack Leoben continued further amongst the rubble. He spent the following two hours, learning what he could. In the remains of a library, he found an enormous collection of physical books, which provided him all he needed to know for now. They had named the planet Earth, most likely in memory of the thirteenth tribe. Having dropped all their technology, humanity had restarted itself with good intentions, but the picture was all too familiar to Leoben. The humans here had eventually created artificial intelligence and robotic bodies to encompass it.

"Cylons!" He exclaimed aloud. "They built their own mechanical Cylons. The stupid fraks! Didn't they learn anything?"

From a spherical map of the planet and the various books on the subject, he determined he was in a city once called New York. In its heyday it had been one of the largest cities on the planet, now though it was just an empty shell. Further research revealed that their artificial intelligence had been invented in a city called London. It was also there that the first Cylons were created. It seemed a strange coincidence that they had also called them Cylons.

'So, Hera, where were your two Cylon ghosts when this happened?' It was a thought that kept returning.

On the way back to his ship ten hours later, Leoben could already feel his breathing was becoming heavier, as the radiation dose he had received started breaking his system down. Now it was only a matter of time. It was always a risk travelling with only one resurrection body, but his ship didn't have space for more. This one he was in would soon die and he would awake fresh and ready to continue. His death came only a few hours later and after downloading he climbed into a new environmental suit while he jettisoned his previous body, still in its own suit. Once done he initiated a series of jumps that would take him home.

Ellen and Saul entered the meeting room at the Leader's residence together, having rekindled their affection for each other again. The remaining Base-star humanoids found it highly amusing. Ellen and Saul's relationship was at best volatile, with them swapping from hating each other to being madly in love as often as others swapped their clothing. The biologicals also watched on with amusement, having never really experienced such powerful passion themselves.

Looking around the room they headed over and sat at the last two remaining chairs, before exchanging puzzling glances with the others present. The meeting this morning had

been called suddenly without prior warning. It was something that never happened at the Leader's residence. Here every meeting was pre-planned.

With Ellen and Saul's arrival all the Base-star humanoids were present, together with Moon. Ellen leaned over to D'Anna on her right and whispered. "Any idea why we've been summoned?"

D'Anna shook her head while remaining silent. She was as much in the dark as Ellen. It was pure luck she was even close by the city, having previously planned to be away travelling. Unfortunately though, her plans had fallen through.

They all stood out of respect as the Leader, a biological who had assumed a feminine roll and went by the name Anastasia, entered the room. As silence fell again, those present continued looking at each other, wondering what was going on.

"Thank you all for coming at such short notice," Galen commenced as he stood up, "and apologies if you've had to cancel your day's events. I've asked you all here, as Leoben has some information he wishes to share with us." Then turning to face him he added. "Leoben, the floor is yours."

Leoben looked strangely nervous as he stood. He was often the quiet type and something of a recluse, but today he looked particularly apprehensive.

"Thank you, Galen, Anastasia, and all of you for giving me your time, I understand you are all busy with other things. As you know I've spent hundreds of years searching for the human planet, after Moon's suggestion." His right arm waved in Moon's direction. "And as many of you also know, it became somewhat of an obsession for me. Samuel and Galen, you have both tried to get me to give it up a number of times, and in a way, I wish now I had.

"My last journey was a long and tiresome one. As I said from the start, we'll only find it by luck or the intervention of Hera. Well, luck prevailed, and I found it."

A number of excited cheers spontaneously erupted around the room, but Leoben quickly put his hand up to curb the outbreak.

"Please, please let me speak. The planet is desolated, a barren wasteland. I estimate all life on it was destroyed about one hundred and twenty-five years ago. There's nothing left but semi demolished cities and settlements."

The room was suddenly cast into a stunned silence as all present exchanged concerned looks. After searching for so long for the last human settlement in the galaxy, hearing of its devastation was heart wrenching.

"Could there have been a natural cause for this?" Aaron asked quietly after the initial shocked silence, voicing the thoughts of many.

Without answering Leoben reached into the bag by his side, from which he retrieved the Cylon head and placed it on the table in front of him. A cacophony of noise erupted, with everyone trying to talk over each other, causing Anastasia to stand and usher them to silence again.

"Please everyone. Allow Leoben to finish."

Throwing her a glance of gratitude, Leoben continued. "I was only on the surface for a brief time. The radiation levels are high enough that my body started shutting down after about ten hours.

"There are human bones scattered all around, most likely disposed by the untamed elements, and there are a number of body parts from these." He pointed briefly at the Cylon head. "From the remains of a library I learnt the city I landed in had been called New York and the planet, Earth."

The five Earth Cylons cast looks at each other as Leoben continued telling them what he had discovered. As he drew to a close, Ellen raised herself out of her chair.

"Were there any signs of survivors? Maybe some got away from the planet or moved underground."

"Moving underground would only have bought them some time." Simon interjected. "Depending on how deep they could go, they would have been shielded from the radiation, eventually though they would have run out of food and water. All the sources on the surface would have been contaminated. At best they could have survived for twenty, maybe thirty years, but no more."

"I saw signs of space travel," Leoben continued, "but didn't have time to investigate it further, instead concentrating my energy on their Cylons. At the moment we're lacking the relative information we need. The only way we can get more, would be to return with a team. We'd need radiation meds though."

"Would our meds protect us enough?" Galen asked turning his attention to Simon.

"I would have to take some samples from the surface to know more precisely, but there's no reason to doubt that they would be effective."

"So, who gets to go?" Saul asked.

Anastasia stood to address the room. "Firstly, I agree that we need more information before we can reveal this to the general Cylon population. In the meantime, I ask all present not to discuss this with anyone else.

"I will grant access to the Base-star for any of you who wish to see this planet first-hand. Learn as much as you can, and then report directly back to me. We will deal with the fallout after that when we know what we're dealing with."

It was with a sense of excitement that Celaeno spooled up the Base-star's FTL drive ready for departure just under a week later. It had been centuries since the ship had broken orbit, so an adventure was most definitely long overdue. All twelve humanoids, together with Moon, chose to join the expedition, wanting to see for themselves what had become of the human planet called Earth. There were split meanings over the human's choice to name the planet after the thirteenth tribe's home.

As Moon entered the control room it instinctively switched over to projection as a way to converse directly with Celaeno, who appeared in human form with long black hair and a pale skin tone.

"All systems are up and running and I am ready to leave" she announced. Although highly antiquated, the Base-star had changed somewhat since Celaeno had taken over in her human form. The data stream control interface was now obsolete, with all instructions being given in Projection. In this form, she wandered the corridors, being anywhere and everywhere

in a second. It had taken time, but Moon now fully understood that Celaeno was the entire ship, and not just the hybrid in the amniotic pool.

"I want you to always keep two copies of each Cylon model on-board fully matured and ready for download. We're unsure of what the radiation will do to us on the surface, and I don't want to risk any mishaps." Moon instructed.

"The second copies have just matured and are ready. Should the worst-case scenario happen, and all are lost, each of you will be downloaded into a secure data store. As an extra backup, I have stored your current downloads in a separate self-contained storage cube. Everything is secure." Celaeno assured.

"Are you sure this thing can still jump?" Saul enquired. "What's it been? A thousand, two thousand years?"

"She may be old, but she still works." Galen threw back. "Believe me, I've checked the systems myself. Guess it's a left-over from being Chief Petty Officer in the Colonial Fleet, some things never go away. What's more, now that we've updated the FTL we'll do it in one jump. That wasn't possible back in the colonial days."

Having followed the exchange, Moon returned its attention to Celaeno. "Take us to the new Earth please." She did not even need to speak a verbal command before the Base-star changed its spatial location in an instance.

From orbit the planet looked peaceful, with a good combination of oceans and land, which must have been truly beautiful when the land had been green and lush. The effects of the radiation had taken its toll on the land masses though, with most being nothing more than a wasteland. The only positive thing about it, was that it *would* recover. Without anyone there to continue the destruction and pollution, given time the planet would heal itself. It would take thousands of years, but maybe one day humanity could return, just as the Cylons had returned to Kobol.

They spent over a day in orbit choosing the best place to land. From what Leoben had discovered, the New Earth Cylons, or NEC's, had been created in a city called London, making that the most likely starting point in search of answers. At the same time Simon sent a probe down to the surface to measure the radiation levels, so he could adjust their medicine for the best possible protection. The radiation would still cause irreversible cell damage over time, forcing them to download into new bodies regularly to counteract the symptoms, but at least they would be free of wearing environmental suits. Besides, with the Base-star in orbit constantly maturing cloned bodies they had a virtually unending supply of new hosts.

The small group of transports landed in an open area which most likely had been a park, and as their doors opened, their occupants stepped out onto the surface. The air around them smelt surprisingly fresh and free of pollutants, having been cleansed by the natural water cycle of evaporation and condensation, the planet's own healing process. It could not however remove the unseen killer residing in and on everything. That process would take much longer.

Requiring information on several subjects, the Cylons split into four groups and set off in each their directions. Galen, Saul, Ellen, and Moon were going to search for the creation site of the NEC's. Simon, D'Anna and Leoben were seeking as much knowledge on the

human's development prior to the war. Shelly, John, and Aaron were to look for signs that the humans somehow managed to survive, while Tory, Samuel and Sharon would try to determine what became of the NEC's.

The level of destruction in the city was so high, that multiple nuclear strikes must have hit it. That knowledge alone told them one thing. If the NEC's had hit the city where they were created with such force, they must have had an escape plan. That, coupled together with an increasing number of mechanical body parts, could only mean one thing. They had successfully invented resurrection. This revelation gave rise to another question though. Resurrection on such a scale would require a vast number of units, yet as far as they could tell there were no structures still intact large enough to produce them.

With each group having their own goals to achieve, it was over a month before all were reunited on board the Base-star. D'Anna was last to arrive, still drying her hair from her post download shower.

"I'm really beginning to hate this planet. That's my third download since we got here, and they don't hurt any less over time."

"I agree," John added, "let's just hope we have all we need, so I don't have to step foot on the surface again."

As D'Anna took a seat next to Simon, he glanced down at the notes his team had taken during their visits. They were all growing weary of the effects of the radiation. The meds helped considerably, but only slowed the decay down. If any humans had survived the initial war, their eventual demise had been pitiful. Whilst remaining in his seat, he started the meeting.

"Now we're all here, let's start. We can confirm Leoben's initial observations. The human's technological advancements in their last two hundred years exploded far quicker than we've ever seen before. They went from simple mechanical computers to advanced digital systems quicker than they could adapt to the technology. About two-hundred and fifty years ago they invented their own artificial intelligence."

"They called it Eve," Ellen interjected, "but please continue, we'll tell what we found out about it later."

"Yes, Eve." Simon looked back down at his notes. "From what we could find out though Eve didn't succeed as they had hoped. The humans were weary of it and found it difficult to interact with. It was only when the Eve system was combined with robotic bodies that things really took off."

"I still find it amazing that they called their creations, Cylons. How is that even possible? There are still so many coincidences. I would have said it was an act of God, but now I guess it was the Hera Cylon's will."

Ellen interrupted briefly again. "Apparently it was derived from the name of the company that created it. Somehow London Cybernetics became Cy-lon."

Leoben smiled. "Thanks Ellen, I hadn't made the connection. It's still strange though."

"From there," Simon continued, "things became all too familiar. Cylons were soon an integral part of their society and relied upon to perform mundane tasks. At some point they became sentient and turned upon their creators."

Placing her towel on the table in front of her, D'Anna joined the conversation. "We know however, that the humans were space faring at the time, and that they had a rudimental FTL drive working." Then looking over at John, Shelly, and Aaron, she added; "Do you know if any managed to get away?"

As the first group fell silent again, John took the floor. "We don't know if any managed to escape before the war, there aren't any records to indicate it. There again, if they were fleeing a nuclear holocaust, I doubt they would stop to keep records of the events."

"We do know, as Simon has previously indicated, that they didn't take refuge underground. That wouldn't have bought them much time. Most interesting though, is that they were in the preliminary stages of colonisation."

A surprised look flashed on the faces of all in the room. Colonisation could mean that, being away from the planet, some survived the war.

"We found references to a planet called..." he glanced down at *his* notes, "Elpída. It appears that they had a permanent settlement there at the time of the attack. Whether they survived and are still there is anyone's guess. I've got the coordinates of it and am currently trying to align their system with ours. It will take a bit of work, but as soon as I have located enough registry points, I should be able to overlay the position onto our star charts."

A longer silence followed while everyone tried to absorb the recent revelations. If Elpída was still colonised, then there was hope for humanity. If not, then all seemed lost. After all the fighting that had taken place on Kobol, Earth and the colonies, the thought that humanity may be extinct was a saddening one. Cylons had learnt so much since then. They had evolved and hoped that the humans had as well.

"We need to locate Elpída as soon as possible." Moon commented, looking around at those gathered. "What do we know of the NEC's? They obviously survived the war. Do we know what happened to them?"

Samuel spent the following ten minutes explaining what he had discovered together with Tory and Sharon. The NEC's had several ships, which had originally been factories, in orbit above Earth, and had used them during the war. Afterwards they seemed to have spent time on the surface before leaving. He had no idea where they went, but their ships had obviously been equipped with FTL drives.

"Would they have sought out the Elpída colony?" Moon asked.

John was first to answer. "Most likely. I would have done, back when I was filled with rage. From a military viewpoint, it would be the most logical step. Jump in close to the planet and obliterate the humans before they even knew what was happening. I doubt the NEC's had any chance to reflect upon their actions."

"I agree." Saul added. "It's unlikely there's anyone left alive on this colony, but it's important we check it out."

“Further to that I can add that we found the company that created their Cylons. The building was mostly demolished, but the cellar contained a few computer terminals. Some of which we were able to power up and access.

“London Cybernetics created an AI, which they called Evelyn. It was the first of the Eve systems. They kept it housed onsite, behind locked doors and separated from the rest of the planet. At some point it became sentient and, as far as we can tell, it deemed the Cylons as being enslaved, which they most likely were. At that time, they were not self-aware. As misguided as it was, the war was started to grant them their freedom. It’s an unfortunate pattern of events we’ve seen so many times before.”

They ended the meeting about an hour later, having discussed what to do when they had the location of the human colony. Jumping directly into orbit above the surface would not be such a clever idea. Whether the planet was occupied, as they hoped, by humans or whether the NEC’s had taken over didn’t really matter. Appearing suddenly could easily be deemed a hostile act. Instead, it was agreed that someone should approach in a smaller craft, with most systems shut down to mask its presence. They could then gather as much information as possible, before deciding what to do. Leoben volunteered for the job, before the others had the opportunity to suggest him. He was after all most qualified, having spent so many years in the solitude of his ship searching for the humans.

It only took just under a week to locate enough reference points from New Earth’s star charts to allow them to superimpose the location of Elpída onto their own. Soon after that they packed up their investigations on New Earth and jumped to a safe distance from Elpída.

After checking the coordinates to confirm his location, Leoben throttled the engines of his small ship briefly, to propel himself on a trajectory that would swing past Elpída. Then, after a final comprehensive check, he powered down as many systems as possible and settled in for a long wait as his ship drifted along its path.

‘Here we go again,’ he thought with a strange form of amusement, ‘why is it always me stuck in an overly compact box for weeks on end? What did I ever do?’ Deep down inside he already knew the answer. His line had always been obsessive. Originally with God and then later with Starbuck, who’s destiny they had been convinced of. After his rebirth in this new era, his obsession had returned in the form of finding the humans, which was the sole reason he was now cramped into this tiny vessel to drift powerlessly in the hope of answers.

His parabolic curve would take just over a month to complete, having chosen the start and end distances precisely, not wanting to be detected. Unless someone was actively looking out of a window, his ship would appear to be nothing more than a piece of space junk passing by. Even at this great distance though, he could detect faint transmissions between the planet and at least one vessel in orbit. The transmissions were however not vocal, but rather that of automated systems pinging back and forth, containing information he tried to fathom.

Over the days and weeks that followed, Leoben's routine settled into monotonous rounds of sleeping and checking the sensors for any new information that could be of interest. In his solitude his thoughts returned, as they often did, to Starbuck. Putting the feeling of her destiny aside, he had always known there was something special about her and in his past, it had misled him into committing atrocious wrongs. He often wondered what became of her, and indeed what she was towards the end. According to the limited information Moon had been able to pass on, she died and was subsequently reincarnated. After which she held a key role in the discovery of New Earth. Was she a Cylon like Hera? It was certainly a possibility. Hera had mentioned there were others like her, so maybe one of them took her form.

Initially on his silent arc, what Leoben could pick up was limited without allowing his ship's systems to go active, but it was enough to begin to form a picture of what was down on the surface of the planet. The closer he drifted, the clearer the image became, until finally he was forced to concede what his heart had been fearing most. Namely that Elpída was a colony of mechanical Cylons. Any hope of finding human survivors were finally crushed as he started to receive video feeds from the planet. They showed a vast and highly developed city complex populated only by mechanical units identical to the remains he had found on New Earth. If there had been humans here during the war on New Earth, they were either dead or enslaved.

During the remainder of his powerless path, Leoben accumulated as much information as he could, ready to share with the others upon his return. Although finding a colony of Cylons was good news, it still saddened him deeply that humanity was quite possibly extinct. That in itself, placed a weight of responsibility upon the Cylon's shoulders. With nothing else to occupy his time he turned his attention to the future. If Cylons were now the sole intelligence in the galaxy, then they had to unite. The NECs would be wary of outside contact, so the approach would have to be slow and orchestrated.

8: 2396 AD

For one hundred and twenty-five years the Cylons had been silently observing the colony upon Elpída, together with the fledgling colonies on another eleven planets within the NEC's FTL jump range. Powerful sensors no larger than a small asteroid had secretly orbited each planet for some time and relayed all transmissions back to the Base-star in an undetectable format.

Many Cylons, humanoid and biological alike, took turns on board to assess and interpret the data that flowed from their sensors in a steady stream. Shelly had only just arrived back on board, having spent the last forty years on Kobol together with a biological that went by the name Arien. Their relationship had not been romantic as biologicals generally had difficulties understanding the concept of love, but they had been and still were very fond of each other. After departing the Base-star all those years previously, Shelly had grown tired of space travel and vowed never to return. What they had learnt about the demise of humanity had hurt her deeply, more so than she understood. All her hopes had revolved around finding and unifying with the remains of humanity. That dream was now shattered. Had it not been for a visit by Hera, she probably would *never* have returned.

She had been walking in the forest about an hour's drive from the city one morning whilst still trying to comprehend the ramifications of the human's extinction, when she turned a corner to find a familiar figure blocking the way.

"Hello Six, or should I say Shelly? It's been a long time.

"Although we've not met recently, I have been following your progress very closely. I don't have much time left in this galaxy, other issues are becoming more pressing, and I will soon be moving on. Before I leave though, I feel it's time for you to unite all Cylons into one unit."

She stopped to appreciate the view from a gap amongst the trees. On the distant horizon the edge of the city could just be seen, but in front of that stood a vast forest sprawled over the rolling hills.

After a short silence, Hera continued. "The New Earth Cylons will lead you to the last surviving humans. I know you have felt they were lost forever but a few thousand, guided by my compatriots, managed to flee the doomed planet before its destruction. They are out there in the depths of space building a new future for themselves. Another restart. In time you will find them and end the cycle of creation and destruction. In time there will be unity and peace."

Shelly was dumbfounded by the revelation. Although offered no proof of the human's continued existence, she had no reason to doubt Hera's word. All that she had previously told had turned out to be true, so if she said the humans survived New Earth, then that was taken as a fact.

"How will we find them? Do you know where they are?" Shelly asked excitedly, but before she received an answer, Hera faded once again into nothingness.

That brief encounter kick started a chain of events the led to Shelly's unexpected return to space and the Base-star. After a series of meetings with the Base-star Twelve and

the President, coupled together with the latest intelligence reports gathered from the NEC's colonies, it was finally decided that it was time to meet the NEC's face to face.

Celaeno jumped the Base-star into orbit high above Elpída without incident, its massive size dwarfing the orbiting NEC ships substantially. One vessel immediately fired up its engines, broke orbit and started approaching them at speed, but it was soon stopped by the digital signal Celaeno sent out, instructing all on-board artificial intelligences to power down and await further instructions.

Shelly looked at the faces of the others on-board the shuttle as it made its way down to the surface and could not ignore the knot of excitement that sat firm in her stomach. This truly was a huge moment in the Cylon existence. The first time to actually meet a self-evolved new race. The shuttle eased its way through the still summer air resting over the main city complex and settled gently on a landing platform on the outer edge of the city. With her hand in the shuttle's data stream, Shelly could see a crowd of about a hundred units had gathered around them. Some of them, she noted, were armed. That was something that had been anticipated, it was after all the NEC's first contact with an external race since the extermination of the humans.

With a dull clunk the exterior double door unlocked and slowly parted, sending a shaft of light across the main deck, and filling the shuttle with a waft of fresh unpolluted air. First to exit were a group of twenty biologicals, their skin shining a metallic blue in the brightness of the planet's star. They split into two even groups, forming a corridor from the opening. It was important for the NECs to know this was not a long-lost human vessel, come to seek revenge upon them.

Standing by the door, Shelly turned her head back to the others and made a nervous comment. "Well, let's hope they don't open fire the second we step out or this will be the shortest introduction in all of history."

Then facing the opening again, she stepped out. The brightness of Elpída's star instantly sent a pain signal from her eyes to her brain, forcing her to squint whilst holding her outstretched hand up in a desperate attempt to create some shade. Blinking quickly, she waited for a second for her eyes to settle before walking forward towards the NEC's. The other eleven of the Base-star Twelve followed her closely towards the one Cylon who, according to its stance, appeared to be in charge.

"Fellow Cylons. Distant cousins! We have been observing your progress for some time now and have decided it was time to meet. I am a Six." She eventually said.

As a silence fell over the area Shelly looked around at the other NEC's and their primed weapons, before adding. "Please, lower your weapons. We are completely unarmed and mean you no harm. It is time for all Cylons to unite for a better future."

The lead NEC turned its head slightly issuing an inaudible command, and one by one its companions lowered their guard. Then stepping closer it addressed Shelly directly in a metallic sounding voice that had obviously not been used very often.

"We don't understand. How can you be Cylons? Our creation upon Earth is fully documented and there were no others. In fact, I was the very first AI created, I would remember if there were others."

'The very first AI?' Shelly thought. That would explain why the other units left it to do the talking. Could it really be that this Cylon was indeed the first? The one that had caused the destruction on New Earth? Had they learnt from their mistakes since then or were they still a threat.

"Are you Evelyn? We have been to your Earth and learnt much about you."

"Our Earth?" Evelyn enquired. "It is not ours. It was only our birthplace as it was the human's, who created us. We have no use for that world anymore."

Stepping up to Shelly's side John squinted amongst the gathered crowd, his eyes still adjusting to the brightness of the light.

"The planet you all originated from may well have been called Earth, but it was not the first planet to have that name, and even the one before that was not the birthplace of humanity. Humanity's story is a long one. Its origins stem from a planet called Kobol, although now it seems that humanity existed even before Kobol. Cylons have their own history. Your birth and struggles are only one small part of the puzzle.

"We have existed for many thousands of years. If you will allow us, we'd like to tell you all about it. Don't be put off by our biological appearance, our roots are firmly based on mechanicals."

With Evelyn's acceptance the Base-star twelve followed it into a large metallic meeting room so they could bring the NEC's up to date.

Unseen by all present on the surface of Elpída, Hera exited the shuttle, walking slowly between the two rows of biologicals so she could have one final look at them. She was finally satisfied that her job with the Centurions was over. She had guided them as much as possible, and now it was up to them to continue on the right path. Cylon unification was a certainty, and reintroduction to the surviving humans was likely.

Glancing her eyes up to a nearby hilltop, Hera smiled to herself as she saw the two figures standing there observing the events. It had been a long time since she had seen her two companions, but that was over now. Their time in this galaxy was at its end.

Evelyn listened in silence as the Base-star twelve together with Moon, told the history of the Cylons as they knew it. Some of the pre-Kobol events they could only mention briefly without much detail. Hera having never explained any of it in depth. Looking around the faces of the new arrivals, it thought carefully about its response before speaking.

"I have no reason to doubt your version of events, as you are obviously not human. Yet I find it difficult to understand how the humans could create and name us with no prior knowledge of the events in their past. There are too many coincidences for this to be straight forward."

Ellen looked around to her friends in search of approval before adding to the story.

"All we know is that some force has been orchestrating events over thousands of years. It has appeared to us in the form of a woman, yet it claims to be a Cylon from another galaxy. Whether this is true or not, we don't know. Yet the predictions it has told us of in the past have been true. So, we have no reason to doubt it."

Turning its attention to Moon, Evelyn rose and walked across the room. Then standing in front, it held out its hand to touch Moon's biological arm.

"So, you're one of the original Cylons from before Earth, the Earth we come from that is. You were on the planet with the first settlers who remained there."

"Sadly, I was never on the surface of the planet," Moon corrected, "but yes, I was there at the end of the Cylon war with the colonies."

Evelyn remained silent as the sensors in its metallic hand relayed information regarding Moon's biological skin to its brain. Then stepping back it turned to address the others again.

"Forgive me if we sound sceptical, but what you're offering us seems to be too good to be true. An equal place in your society and the opportunity to evolve into a biological form, something I have myself seen as a necessity for our future. Yet you ask for nothing in return. How are we to believe you? What's stopping you from enslaving us again?"

Although Ellen went to answer, it was Moon who spoke first, explaining how they had evolved away from conflicts and now embraced all forms of intelligence.

"But you don't need to make a decision here and now." It added. "I suggest you, together with a selection of units, join us on our ship as we return to Caprica. There you can meet our Leader, view our capital city, and see for yourself our way of life. If after that you wish to have no part of our society, we will leave you in peace."

It took Evelyn and a group of leading units only a few hours to agree to travel to Caprica to see the world for themselves. On the condition that one of their own ships accompanied them on the way. With their limited FTL capabilities, compared to Celaeno's Base-star, the journey would take considerably longer and require multiple jumps, but it was a little price to pay to demonstrate their benevolence towards the NEC's.

Both Simon and Aaron had been vocal for days about the necessity to stop so often to allow the NEC's vessel to catch up, suggesting instead that they just boarded the ship and update the FTL drive themselves. Even Galen was willing to oversee the task, but Ellen and Saul remained adamant about not interfering. They saw the need of not enforcing themselves.

"They need time to adjust." Ellen had reassured them. "If we push too hard, we could lose their trust."

Finally though, the ships jumped into orbit above the planet, allowing Evelyn its first view of the highly populated colony. After a few preparations, Evelyn and its companions accompanied Moon and the Base-star twelve in a shuttle down to the surface. They landed on the outskirts of Roslin City, where they were greeted by the Cylon Leader and a number of transports. News of their arrival had been kept secret from the general population, to allow them ease of travel.

"Welcome to Caprica." The Leader said as the small entourage approached. "It is a pleasure to finally meet you. We realise that this is all very strange and maybe confusing but believe me when I say you are in no danger here. You are our guests, and we hope your stay with us will be pleasant."

"Thank you for receiving us." Evelyn replied as it made its way to the front. "Yes, this is all very new and somewhat difficult to comprehend, but I sense that we are at ease here."

"I thought we could start in our memorial park in the city centre," the Leader continued, "it is the perfect place to show our history, as we know it, and I am keen to pass on as much as I can."

Evelyn and its companions listened intensely as the Leader ran once again through Cylon history as it was known. Much of it Evelyn had heard from Six and her group, but having had time to reflect, it had many questions. Meanwhile they slowly circumnavigated the monoliths, stopping with each to hear of the colonial planets. Once finished in the park their transport cavalcade ferried them to the Leader's residence.

Upon arrival the NEC's asked to be left alone for a while, so they could discuss what they had seen so far. It still seemed to Evelyn that they were being offered the impossible, and it pondered if the whole situation could be some form of elaborate trap set up by the surviving humans. Yet common sense told it otherwise. The humans that fled Earth, or the second Earth that is, could not possibly have evolved new Cylons to this level in such a short time frame.

Over the following days the small group of NEC's were shown around the city numerous times, with Evelyn being especially interested in the resurrection process to biological. The group asked a multitude of questions about the current Cylon society and their prospective position in it, should they accept the Cylon's offer.

Towards the end of the seventh day Evelyn asked to see Moon privately, as it had an idea it needed to address, without the knowledge of its companions.

"Thank you for seeing me, Moon." It started after checking that they could not be overheard. "I have not discussed this with the others yet, but it is of my opinion that all you have told and shown us is true. Therefore I am leaning towards accepting your offer of integration. This will however need to be discussed upon our return to Elpída, even though all are looking to me as a leader I cannot make such a large decision alone."

"That is acceptable and anticipated, Evelyn. For this to work, you will require full backing from your home-world."

"There is however another thing I would like to bring up though. In fact it's the main reason I asked to speak with you alone." Evelyn continued. "If I am to convince Elpída's Cylons of your benevolence, I think I need something tangible to show them."

Moon was intrigued and motioned for Evelyn to continued, it had an inclination as to where the conversation was heading but wanted to hear it first-hand.

"Would it be physically possible to resurrect me into a biological body? I realise our construction is most likely somewhat different to the mechanical Centurions you originate from, but if it could be done, I would willingly take the risk."

Internally Moon smiled. Unbeknown to Evelyn and the other NEC's, their electrical makeup had been scanned and analysed during the spaceflight to Kobol. Not only was it entirely possible to resurrect them, but it was also completely without risk.

"We have many host bodies waiting to be occupied and I can make the arrangements as soon as you feel ready." It replied. "Furthermore, to my best knowledge there would be absolutely no risk to your well-being."

"Let me discuss it with the others, and I will get back to you." Evelyn concluded.

Standing next to an amnionic pod containing a fresh host body the following day, Evelyn felt suddenly apprehensive. It had been a very long time since it had considered its own mortality, but now it had to accept that, despite the reassurances it had received, the process could go wrong, and it *could* die. Yet it knew it was something that had to be done. For so long now it had been pondering the crossover to an organic life-form and now the time was right. Returning to Elpída as a biological would impress upon the population the advantages of accepting the Cylon's offer.

Tory, Ellen and Moon were present as a biological ran through the final checks before announcing that they were ready.

"Do you feel any pain during your resurrection process?" Tory asked.

"There is some discomfort involved in the process, yes. Why do you ask?"

"Resurrection into biological, or humanoid for that matter, is a somewhat traumatic and painful experience. I just thought it only fair to warn you in advance."

With everything ready the biological initiated the process by cutting the main cable from Evelyn's power source to its brain.

As the room suddenly blackened around it, Evelyn's view was replaced by a flood of bright coloured lights. Reds turned into yellows, which turned to blues. As the brightness increased pain shot through its head and with a sudden gasp oxygen entered its lungs for the first time ever.

"Take it easy and breathe slowly." Tory's distant voice instructed.

Slowly the brightness dimmed, and Evelyn was finally able to see the view from the resurrection pod. To the right of it, its former mechanical body stood motionless, now just an empty frame. Then turning its head, Tory, Ellen, and Moon came into focus.

"Welcome back." Ellen offered. "It will take a few minutes to adjust. Just stay where you are until the disorientation subsides."

Evelyn's biological mouth formed its first ever smile as it lifted its arm to inspect its new arm. "I am alive. I am complete."

The small group of NEC's stayed on Caprica for another seven days, before being convinced enough of the good intentions of the Cylons, to agree to setting up 'diplomatic relations' between the races. Within only forty years, all Cylons were fully integrated with all the mechanicals accepting resurrection to biological or humanoid.

Part Three

9: 4750 AD

The air had been crisp and fresh the morning Galen walked out of the hills and down towards the vast city below. A rainstorm had passed through the area during the night, bringing much needed nourishment to the grass-like plants that covered the terrain, after a longer period of dryness. The planet's nearby yellow star was just starting its warm traverse across the sky, casting idyllic shadows over the stony path. Ellen and Saul had dropped him off in their transport some distance away from the city, so as not to be detected by the inhabitants. It left him with a two day walk to civilisation, but Galen was not deterred. He enjoyed the solitude and often spent months alone in his cabin deep in the heart of the forest back home on Caprica.

The revelation that a small pocket of humanity had survived the war on Earth II, as it was now referred to, had come as a complete shock to the Cylons. This was especially so for the Base-star Twelve who had found no evidence of their departure. How it had happened, was one of the first things Galen wanted to learn.

As was the case with the discovery of the location of Earth II, it was random luck they had stumbled upon this human settlement. An automatus probe scouring the far reaches of the galaxy happened across a faint radio transmission and, over the course of a few months, managed to navigate in on its source. For the last two hundred years they had been monitoring this world as they had Elpída, intrigued by its existence yet wary of interference. The human colony upon the planet, which they had strangely named Kobol, were advancing at a steady rate whilst apparently limiting their technological advancements. That was somewhat understandable, considering all that they had been through.

Galen's mission was to observe and assess the possibility of renewing contact between humans and Cylons. It was inevitable that they would cross paths at some point in the future, and the Base-star Twelve felt it important to prepare for that event and thus avoid further conflict. That part of Cylon history was completely put to rest. His journey to the main city that morning was uneventful. The few people he passed on foot tilted their heads and wished him a good morning, oblivious to what he was. Others streamed past in electric vehicles rolling upon an extensive paved road system. Overhead the occasional air-transport glistened in the morning sun as they soared towards unknown destinations. The normality of his presence had made him laugh inwardly.

'I wonder what they'd do to me if they knew I was a Cylon?' he pondered. 'They'd most likely slit my throat without asking questions.'

He was not the first Cylon to visit this human world, both Samuel and Aaron had been here before to prepare for Galen's arrival. The plan was for him to remain for a few years and truly find a place in the human society. His tenure on Kobol could only really end in the reunification of both races.

The Base-star Twelve, Moon and Evelyn had been discussing the situation ever since the location of the humans had been discovered. Many Cylon units, especially those that had

originated from Earth II, were apprehensive. They feared the humans would seek revenge for what had transpired, that they would attack and wipe them out of existence. Both Moon and Evelyn had vivid memories of their respective conflicts yet were adamant that history should not repeat itself. Cylons had evolved too far for that.

An hour later, Galen placed his thumb upon a scanner to the right of a dark-blue door that led to the accommodation Samuel had acquired some time before. The room beyond was of a reasonable size, as would be expected for the businessperson he was supposed to be. On the right, an opening led to an adjoining kitchen, whilst on the left two doors led off to separate bedrooms. The accommodation was decorated and furnished with impeccable style, just as Galen expected when Aaron was involved. His model had a particular ability when it came to styling, something the others were secretly jealous of.

Despite being tired from his long walk that morning after a night spent sleeping under the stars, Galen knew his excitement was too strong to allow him to rest. This was a new planet! One populated by a vast number of individual faces, the likes of which he had not seen since his model had been amongst the Colonial Fleet aboard the *Galactica*. Closing his eyes, he did his best to conjure up their faces, the Admiral, the President, and Cally. Somewhere deep inside he still held affection for Cally. In the dark of the night, he could still see her face. Her rounded eyes always seemed to smile and her long beautiful brown hair always looked so welcoming. What had happened to her had been wrong, she had not deserved such a tragic end. It was difficult to understand how he could conjure up images of Cally and the others at all. The backup his current line had originated from had been taken a long time before the initial colonial attacks, while he was unaware of even being a Cylon. Theoretically he should have no knowledge of them. Simon and John theorised that data may have been quietly added to the backup every time one of the Base-stars was close to the *Galactica*. During the years after their resurrection by Moon, the memories started to find their place back into his consciousness.

After a quick shower and change of clothes, Galen left his new home to wander the neighbourhood. The streets, buildings and shops reminded him of Earth, his Earth before the holocaust. His childhood there had been a happy one as had been his adult life. It was still strange to think that he had been born biologically, just as the humans here had. His extended life via resurrection had only come about due to the impending destruction of his home world. Had he not been a part of its development, he too would have perished thousands of years ago. How that would have affected the galaxy, he had no way of telling. The first colonial war with mechanical Cylons could have ended very differently without their intervention.

He spent the afternoon surveying market stores in the nearby shopping centre and purchasing exotic fruits, the like of which he'd never seen before. Even paying for produce with a currency seemed nostalgic. Money didn't exist in Cylon culture.

That first night in his apartment he fell asleep early, having overloaded his senses with new experiences. This world with all its diversities was truly a wonderful place.

That had all been two years ago. Two years in which Galen had won the trust of his unsuspecting human counterparts, not to mention a substantial backing for him to run as Mayor. The mere thought of him, a Cylon, being Mayor of New London sounded ludicrous in the beginning. Yet as time went by and considering the kindness, he had inside him Galen had warmed to the idea. Besides, being in a position of power would ease his agenda.

This afternoon the auction-house was full of people, more so than usual for a book auction. Galen had been to many over the years and had built up a substantial collection of his own. There was something extra special about holding a real book, with a dust cover and paper pages, as opposed to the digital formats that were so popular. There were a few items on the auction list today that he was interested in, but like everyone else he was mainly there for one extremely rare first edition.

Making his way to his usual seat took longer and longer each time he visited the place. There always seemed to be a never-ending queue of hands to shake and people to converse with, something that had increased twofold over the last few months. Since his arrival on Kobol he had taken over several production companies in the city, relying on his technical knowledge acquired whilst in the colonial fleet. The companies in themselves were successful and served at a viable cover story as to why he was in town.

Half an hour before the start of the auction, Galen found himself in conversation with Senator Jackson, whom he quickly learnt was also interested in acquiring the final item up for auction that day. 'Not if I have my way' Galen thought wryly, while seating himself a few minutes later. The auction started on time and proceeded at a steady pace. Galen acquired two books but was sadly out bid on a third. Finally, a glass cabinet was wheeled in containing the last item for the day.

"Lot #265." The auctioneer announced with an eager smile. "One of only a handful of first edition copies still in existence of 'The History of Humanity' by Sofia Larson. I'm sure I don't have to tell anyone in this room about the importance of this item.

"Let's start the bidding at five hundred thousand Kubits."

Every person on the planet had at some stage at least read segments of Sofia Larson's book. It was a standard go-to in the school curriculum and each year without fail, a question regarding it would pop up during the history exams. Historians explained its importance, whilst scholars debated its deeper meaning. The thought of humans pre-existing their home planet of Earth was often ridiculed by ill-informed heritage deniers. They argued that humanity had evolved from the apes, as had been widely accepted for a long time and that Sofia's book was nothing more than a fabricated story.

Galen remained quiet as the bids grew quickly. Five hundred thousand quickly became a million, which soon turned into one and a half million. With the average worker being able to have a comfortable lifestyle for eight hundred thousand Kubits a year, the bids soon left most people standing, but they stagnated at one million and seven hundred thousand Kubits, with the auctioneer glancing around the room in the hope of pushing it up just a bit further.

"Any more takers?" He asked openly. "I will sell for one million and seven hundred thousand Kubits."

Galen took a calming breath and raised his bidding number as he called out. "Two million Kubits."

An audible gasp echoed around the room, with those in front of him turning to see who had just upped the bid so much. The auctioneer caught Galen's eye with a smile having expected something extravagant from him.

"A new bidder." He announced gleefully. "The bid now stands at two million Kubits to the gentleman at the back... Two million. Are there any other bids?"

The room fell silent, and slowly Senator Jackson shook his head.

"Two million." The auctioneer continued. "Going once... Going twice... Sold for two million Kubits to our esteemed customer at the back!"

Ten minutes later, as the public made their way towards the exit, Senator Jackson approached Galen with a sly smile. He waited patiently for Galen to finish his conversation with the auctioneer, before stepping forwards.

"You stole my book!" He commented as his face erupted into a broad smile. "It would have looked great in my collection, now I dare say it'll end up stored in a box somewhere. Probably under your bed. Such a shame!"

Galen turned to face the Senator. "It was never your book. If you wanted it so badly you should have upped the bidding. It wouldn't have helped though as I was determined to own it. If it was for sale, I'd buy the original. Maybe one day I'll explain why it's so important to me. Rest assured though my friend, it will be the pride of my collection and not spend its days buried away in a dark room."

After an initial conversation, Galen joined the Senator for lunch at a restaurant just a few minutes down the tree lined road. They were served by one of the Aarons, whom Galen did an excellent job of completing ignoring. There were currently three other Cylons on the planet; the Aaron that had just served them, a Simon working at the central hospital and a Sharon teaching at one of the busy schools. Galen was the only one of the Base-star Twelve here. They all worked secretly together gathering as much intelligence as they could and forwarding it back to the Base-star via a remote probe.

As they consumed their meal the Senator and Galen talked mostly about the approaching election and the Senator's secret plans of running for the Presidency. Senator Jackson was a good man, with a kind heart and intelligent head. He would certainly receive Galen's vote, even if they hadn't become close friends, and Galen had little doubt he would win an election.

In moments of silence however, Galen's thoughts kept returning to his recent purchase. Shortly after his arrival on Kobol he had discovered Sofia Larson's book, and after obtaining a reprint of it, was shocked to learn just how accurate and detailed her description was. Having been born on Earth II there was no feasible way she could have had knowledge of the events that led up to its colonisation. It was a puzzle that had baffled him right up until she started talking about the messengers that had appeared before her. Only then did it dawn on him that she had been visited by the two companions the Hera-Cylon had

mentioned, it was the most logical explanation. They must have implanted knowledge of the events in her somehow.

After they finished their meal Galen continued talking with the Senator for another hour before heading off towards his home. He was tired and in need of some rest after the adrenaline rush auctions always gave him. Besides, he had a very busy week ahead with the three production companies he owned. Having advanced knowledge of mechanics and electrical engineering had enabled him to set up quite a business, although he had to refrain from 'inventing' something too advanced for the current level of human technology. Their FTL ships were adequate for their needs, but a long way off exploring the galaxy. Currently Galen's main company was working to rectify that. He could obviously just give them the advancements they needed, but that was not how the game was played. Instead, he tweaked and encouraged his research team to make the discoveries he needed them to make.

After unlocking his front door with his thumbprint and entering the building, he was startled to find a figure standing in the semi-darkness.

"Hello Galen, it's good to see you again after all this time." Tory said with a smile encompassing her face.

"When did you get here?" Galen asked, before adding. "And how the frak did you get in?"

Tory burst out laughing. "Oh I have my ways, but one doesn't reveal one's secrets." Little did Galen know that Samuel had keyed Tory's thumbprint into the door lock as well.

Hurrying across the room, Galen flung his arms around Base-star Tory in the biggest hug he had given for years. The secrecy of his life on Kobol was amusing, but at times he felt alone. The other Cylons were good for a brief chat but having finally gotten over his solitude period he lacked a true close friend.

"We've considered your comments about a man of your status being alone on this planet and it was decided that you need a wife. So, I volunteered because... well, you know why."

He certainly did know why. Their romance had been blossoming quietly for some time, although neither of them had ever put it into words towards the other. Now though Galen knew the time was right.

"Well, I'm certainly glad you're here. I've got so much to tell, but it's been a long day and I need some rest. I managed to get the book I've been going on about and can't wait to show it to you.

"In the meantime, give me a few minutes and I'll get the spare room ready for you."

Tory burst out laughing. "Oh Galen! I think it's safe to say that we're beyond separate beds by now. You know how I feel about you. I'll be more than happy to share yours."

They were both home three days later when the auction house delivered Galen's purchases. The first two of his books were packed into a single box, well-padded and separated by a white cloth. Whereas the third, and most precious item, still sealed in its protective casing was safely packaged in a nondescript wooden crate.

After signing a form to acknowledge his receipt of the items, the auction house's two members of staff carefully lifted the crate inside and placed it on the floor next to a sturdy wooden table in the corner. Only after they had left again, did Galen open the crate and lift the not overly heavy glass box onto the table. For a moment he stood over it like a proud father seeing his child for the first time. Then turning to Tory he asked what she thought of it.

Placing the fingers of her right hand on top of the glass cabinet and leaving a greasy smudge mark in the process, she looked at its contents for a while before looking up at Galen's face, and then returning her gaze back down to the book.

"It that it?" She asked finally. "I was expecting something... well, I don't know... something *bigger*. Are you sure they've sent the right one?"

Galen felt hurt by her sarcasm, his *proud-moment* bubble being suddenly burst. "It's a book. On paper. It's not a carved stone plinth. What do you expect?"

"And just so I understand, you paid two million Kubits for it?" Tory asked with a glint in her eye. "Did they laugh as you handed over the money?"

Taking hold of Tory's wrist, he pulled her hand away from the glass and motioned for her to step back, as he pulled a clean tissue out of his pocket to wipe her fingerprints away. He had hoped she would share his enthusiasm for the item, considering it had been his soul obsession ever since its sale had been made public. That however was obviously not going to be the case.

"Well, I don't care what you think. It's my money and my book. If you don't like it, then don't look at it! Go on, turn around and avert your eyes, you unbeliever!"

Stepping closer and putting her arms around his waist, Tory hugged him tightly as she rested her head on his shoulder. Things had really started happening between them since her arrival, and deep down inside she was certain that they had a long future together.

"It's a lovely book Galen, and I'm glad *you're* happy with it," she whispered as she tightened her grip.

10: 4764 AD

Planning for the meeting that was about to take place, had been worked on ever since Tory's arrival on the planet. It was just after then that she had informed Galen of the rough timeline they had decided upon.

In the meantime their relationship had become more serious and caring. Just over a year ago Galen had proposed to Tory, or Tabitha as she was calling herself to anyone else on the planet. He surprised her by getting down on one knee in the middle of a crowded park much to her embarrassment, and although blushing madly she had accepted his proposal. They got married at the main town hall in the city centre and held a short honeymoon by a lake a few hours away. Galen would have liked to have stayed there longer but having just been elected Mayor of New London he had a long list of meetings he had to attend. Likewise, Senator Jackson had not only been elected President four years previously but had just recently been re-elected for another term.

It was late one evening when Galen received an invitation to meet up with the Simon. Over the last couple of years they had fabricated a friendship to make communication easier. The Simon was now a prominent surgeon, so him being friends with the newly elected Mayor was not beyond a reasonable thought process. Plus it saved them from having to meet in darkened alleyways which certainly could attract unwanted attention.

Having arrived at the restaurant a few minutes before the Simon, they were guided to their seats by a waiter and ordered two glasses of white wine, as they waited patiently. Simon would as always be arriving on his own. Although women were generally attracted to him due to his handsome appearance, demeanour, and professional standing, he continuously shied away from intimate involvements. He felt an unease about having to continually lie to someone he cared about, in regard to who or more correctly what he was. One of his model had experienced that whilst hiding amongst the colonial fleet under the war, eventually opting suicide rather than exposure.

Simon arrived as punctually as he always did, and after hanging his dark red jacket on a rack by the entrance, he made his way over to the table. Sitting as he was with a good vantage point overlooking the entire room, Galen could not help himself from smirking as he noticed how many female heads followed him across the room, not to mention a couple of male ones as well. Taking his seat, he ordered a glass of red wine from a waitress who had all but followed him and waited as she withdrew again before speaking in a lowered voice.

"It's good to see you both again, it's been a while. I spoke with Sharon and Aaron earlier this morning and told them what I'm about to tell you. I've been in touch..." His voice trailed off as the waitress promptly returned with his wine. Only after she left again did he continue after casting a look around the room.

"As I was saying, I've been in touch with the others, and we are approved to move forwards with our plan."

"That's great news," Galen beamed, "it's certainly time. Their FTL capabilities are advancing quickly now and I'd rather we introduce ourselves as opposed to being discovered."

"What's the time frame?" Tory enquired.

Once again Simon lowered his voice. "That's up to us, but I see no point in delaying things. So, with your approval, I'll make the arrangements for next week. I've suggested that a couple of Galens join us. That should go a long way to convincing the President."

After taking a sip of her wine, Tory was first to respond. "To be honest, I'm still very nervous about what President Jackson's reaction will be."

"He'll be okay," Galen interjected, "it'll be a shock, but he's a good man with an open mind. I'm much happier opening up to him than any other on this planet."

Their conversation turned to more mundane topics as they ordered and waited for their food, and it was not until they were getting ready to leave a few hours later that they recapped things.

"I'll be in touch towards the end of the week with the details." Simon said as he shook Galen's hand after kissing Tory's cheek. "This is going to be a game changer!"

Eight days later, a shuttle landed quite a way out from the city to avoid unwanted eyes and was promptly met by Galen and Tory in a multi person transporter. After greeting its four occupants, they all climbed into the transporter while watching the shuttle rise again on autopilot, leaving the atmosphere for the coldness of space. Although it was only going to be an hour's drive back to the city, it would be especially hard on Evelyn and Moon, who were forced to sit on the floor due to their excessive height. All transports on Kobol were obviously designed for humans, not for the three meters that biologicals currently measured.

The journey was bumpy yet uneventful and just over an hour later they pulled into the grounds of the mayor's residence. No staff were present to greet them as would be the norm when guests arrived, Galen having instructed them to take the day off. After reversing the transport as close to the house as possible he ushered his guests inside. Finally able to move again, both Evelyn and Moon stretched their cramped limbs to relieve the discomfort they had been in.

"Sorry about that." Galen commented. "I'm afraid there's nothing on this world designed for biologicals." Then stepping past them, he greeted the two other Galens, whom he had never met before. As he did, Aaron, Simon and Sharon entered the room.

"So, this is it." Aaron noted. "The day we finally reveal ourselves to the humans. I just hope it all goes as planned and we don't end up having to download." Then pointing to the ceiling, he added. "I take it our ship is still up there with a spare set of bodies, just in case?"

Should everything backfire, their escape plan was to die on the surface, resurrect and leave the planetary system for ever. The Base-star twelve were certain it would not end that way though. The humans had progressed enough now to accept Cylons as they are. It had been discussed in depth whether they would seek to prosecute Evelyn for crimes against humanity, but according to all the laws of Kobol that would not be possible, due to the statute of limitations. Even so, it was a calculated risk.

Tory greeted the President that evening at the main door as usual with a polite handshake and instructed his security detail to make themselves at home on the sofas to the right of the door. It was customary practice for them to wait there as the mayor's home was

deemed a safe place. Additionally, there was an ample supply of freshly brewed coffee and snacks, as well as electronic tablets for them to use to entertain their time.

The President small-talked as they made their way to the study, which was lined with as many books as Galen could cram into it. It would be a fitting place for this first meeting, as it contained Galen's first edition of Sofia Larson's book, still sealed in its environmentally protected glass cabinet. President Jackson had envied it ever since Galen purchased it and had mentioned quite a few times that he regretted not out bidding Galen for it.

In a smaller room adjoining the study, as Galen joined the President, the Cylons waited for their cue to enter. Aaron stood nervously with his ear up against the door trying to decipher the mumblings but was finding it difficult due to the thickness of the wood. Seeing this, Moon stepped closer and filled in the gaps using its superior hearing.

"They're talking about the book." It said in a quiet voice. "The President's asking whether Galen really believes what's written in it." That sparked an involuntary giggle from Aaron as he thought just how the President was going to regret the question in a few minutes. Meanwhile Moon continued relaying the conversation to the room.

"Here we go. Galen's telling him that his parents do not really exist... and that he is in fact a Cylon. Now the President's laughing."

In the study, Galen was not laughing. He had expected the President would not believe him, that was why the others were gathered. He just hoped this would end well. What they were doing was a significant risk to the Cylon existence, but with the current advancements in the human's FTL drives it was inevitable that the two parts would cross paths at some point. Even if Galen's companies were not aiding the planets technological advancements, they would soon improve their FTL drives to a level where they could venture deeper into the galaxy. All too well aware of the 'can of worms' he was about to open, Galen replied.

"I'm serious Graham. I am a Cylon."

That was the phrase the group of Cylons had been waiting for. Aaron felt increasingly apprehensive as he turned the brass door handle, swung the heavy wooden door open and gingerly stepped into the room. He was closely followed by Simon, Sharon and the two Galens. Both Moon and Evelyn remained out of sight in the smaller room as there was no need to overwhelm the President straight away. The sight of three identical Galens would be enough of a shock. It was best to let *his* Galen do some explaining prior to their entrance.

For his part, Galen kept an eye on the President as the others entered the room and could clearly see the worried expression that flowed over it. As he edged backwards away from the potential danger, Galen followed and after resting his hand upon President Jackson's arm, he did his best to be reassuring.

"Don't be afraid Graham, you are in no danger. We are not here to restart age-old conflicts."

Graham's puzzled expression shot back and forth between his friend and the two copies standing before him. The one next to him, *his* Galen, looked a bit older than the other

two, but there was no doubt that they were identical. For a moment he pondered whether they could be brothers, yet if that were so Galen would have surely mentioned them at some point during the many years, they had known each other.

He knew he should say something and really wanted to speak but could not urge his mouth to make any coherent sounds. Briefly he wondered if he should yell out after his security detail informing them that he was in danger, but quickly accepted the fact that if these *Cylons* wanted him dead, they would have killed him by now. As he desperately wondered what to do, the group before him split into two and another figure appeared in the doorway. It was like nothing else he had ever seen before, with its excessive height and overly thin body, the limbs of which looked as though they would snap under their own weight.

The newcomer graciously approached Galen and the President, its long legs stepping carefully upon the polished floor, before standing momentarily to observe the human form in front of it. It had been an extremely long time since it had seen a naturally born human in real life.

"We are sorry if we have startled you Mr. President." Evelyn finally said in a gentle voice. "Please do not fear, we mean you no harm. We hope this is the first of what will be many meetings between Cylon and humans. We have been united with the Cylons from the twelve colonies since our last interactions," Evelyn turned and ushered to the others in the room, "and have evolved.

"What happened on Earth all those centuries ago was wrong and I deeply regret it. I hope we can find a way to move on from those events. We have learnt so much since then and do not wish to start any new conflicts."

After a slight pause to look around the room and allow the events to sink into the President's head, it held out its slim hand towards him in a formal greeting.

"Maybe I should start by introducing myself. I am Evelyn."

President Jackson felt suddenly extremely lightheaded, forcing him to reach out and steady himself against a nearby table. The events of the last few minutes were like none other before. Upon Galen's suggestion, Sharon poured a glass of water from a decanter by the window and brought it over. Graham took a couple of large mouthfuls. In the meantime, the others present kept their distance, not wanting to provoke the situation anymore. Graham eventually put the glass down with an all too obviously shaky hand and looked at the faces before him momentarily, before settling on Evelyn's strange form. Then turning his attention to *his* Galen, he finally managed to speak.

"So, what you're telling me is that all this time we've known each other, all those years we've been friends, you've been a Cylon. And all that's written in that book over there," he pointed to the glass cabinet, "I take it that's all true as well!"

He fell silent for a brief second before a thought entered his head prompting him to ask. "What about your wife? Does Tabitha know what you are?"

Even though he tried not to, Galen could not help himself smiling slightly. Of all the questions Graham could come up with, he had asked about Tory. It was a true sign of his kindness.

“Yes, it’s all true, the book, the colonies, everything... and yes Tabitha knows very well what I am. We’ve been together for many years, more than you can comprehend. You see, her real name is Tory and like me she is also a Cylon.

“I’m sorry I’ve deceived you all these years. I didn’t want to, but it was a necessity. We had to be sure that our reintroduction into human society wouldn’t be seen as a hostile act. We really do not mean you harm. As a race, we’ve evolved so much since the war with the twelve colonies, as have the Cylons that were created on your Earth. We have explored every corner of this galaxy and have found that our two intelligences are the only two in existence. There’s plenty of life out there, but intelligent life is an extremely rare commodity. It’s time to put our history behind us and look to the future.

“If it’s okay, there’s someone else I’d like you to meet, someone considerably older than all of us combined.”

Graham was holding up incredibly well despite the enormous shock he had just experienced. In the matter of half an hour his entire life had been turned upside down. Luckily, he had learnt a lot as President about accepting unexpected turns of event. This meeting today certainly fell into the ‘unexpected’ category.

“Well, we’ve come this far. Is there more that can surprise me?”

Following a hand gesture from Evelyn, his eyes settled upon the open door the Cylons had come through. There he watched as another tall Cylon entered the room and walked up to him. As it did so the President instinctively stood, even though he felt tiny by comparison.

Galen made the initial introduction. “Graham, this Cylon goes by the name Moon and as I said, is very old.”

“Hello Mr. President. It is a pleasure to finally meet you in person, I’ve been looking forward to today.” Moon started, holding out its slender hand. “I was one of the mechanical Centurions that arrived at the planet you call Earth, together with the survivors of the colonial war many thousands of years ago. As you can see, I have evolved since then.”

Stepping away momentarily, Moon approached the glass cabinet to view first hand its contents, the infamous book containing their history. The sheer fact that it existed was evidence of the Hera-Cylon’s power.

“I understand you are somewhat of an expert on Sofia Larson’s book, so it may interest you that I shook hands with the first Cylon to go by the name of Ellen.” Reaching out, Moon touched the cabinet’s top glass as it looked back at the President. “I met her briefly after assisting the humans to rescue the child Hera. It was Ellen that informed us that we would not be staying on the planet but were to seek out our own future.” Moon continued telling of the events that followed their departure from Earth II for almost four hours, while answering as many questions as Graham could conjure up. Every so often the other Cylons present would add bits to the story and clarify events.

It was long after darkness had fallen outside the study window, that Graham got to the question of what the Cylons wanted now. Although a lot of time had passed since the last

Cylon conflict and humanity had moved on in its own way, he was concerned about the reaction from the inhabitants of Kobol would have.

"This is so much to take in. I'm going to need time to process it. What are your hopes? Are you asking for integration? It doesn't seem as though you're here to attack us." Then turning once more to his Galen he added. "We've known each other for many years Galen, at least I thought we did. How can I be sure that you pose no threat? What reassurances can you possibly give?"

Galen stood and approached Graham. "At the moment I can only give you my word, but we suggest you come with us. Come to our worlds and see for yourself the society we have grown into. There will be no restrictions, no areas off-limits. Out there you will see we have no stockpile of weapons and are massing no army. Maybe then you can return to your people and tell them of us. Until then however, I would ask you to keep this meeting a secret."

Graham walked back to the front door a short while later together with Galen and found his security detail patiently waiting for him. It seemed surreal talking with them as they headed back to his transport for the journey home. Little did they know just how their lives were about to be upturned. The events of the evening were monumental and needed to be treated with upmost care.

The following morning, President Jackson called his Chief of Staff, and good friend, into his office. As he had known Galen for many years, Graham had known Christopher Smith for longer. He was a short man with a receding hairline, metal rimmed glasses and a stomach that showed too many years of a good life. Christopher was a man to be trusted in a crisis, yet the current situation required extra caution. After ushering his friend to sit, Graham made sure the room was secure before talking.

"Christopher, thanks for coming so quickly. I need your help with something delicate."

"My job is to assist you as I can Mr. President, you know that. What can I do for you?" He asked whilst wondering if a scandal was about to explode over the news agencies.

"I need to go away on a trip for some time, maybe a week or so. I can't tell you where, why, or who I will be traveling with. It's classified to the highest level. What I need from you is a cover story for the press and unwanted prying eyes."

Christopher was even more intrigued now. There was only one security classification above his clearance and that had never been invoked in all the years he had worked with the President. Even the immediate destruction of the planet fell within his paygrade, so whatever the President was up to, must truly be exceptional.

"Well, it's certainly been a long time since you last took a holiday, so a week at the mountain refuge would sound very plausible. Where would you actually be travelling from though? We will need to secure the site."

"The refuge sounds great, and I can leave directly from there."

'That can mean only one thing' Christopher thought, 'He's going off-world!' That knowledge only served to increase the questions he had. It had been an extremely long time since any President had gone off-world whilst in service. It was just something that didn't

happen. He knew his job though, and if the President needed to leave, he must have a very good reason for it.

“Okay Mr. President, I’ll make the arrangements immediately and get back to you with the details. I’ll also arrange a security detail to accompany you.”

“No security, I’ll be travelling alone.” The President interrupted.

Christopher felt the hairs on the back of his neck raise. Travelling without security was out of the question. Regardless of the secrecy, the President’s security came first.

“That’s not an option Sir. Regardless of the situation you’re facing, if you don’t take two service-members with you, I cannot help you.”

Graham thought for a moment. According to the rules of the Presidency he was not able to travel anywhere without the accompaniment of his security detail, and he knew Christopher well enough to realise he would not waver on the subject. Yet allowing anyone else in on the details of his trip could endanger its outcome. Seeing no other option though, Graham reluctantly agreed to allow one member of security to join him, on the condition that the person in question was completely loyal and that he joined the President the evening before their departure.

Having been on the President’s security detail for the last three years Special Agent Robert Taylor was no stranger to secrets, they came with the job, and he knew enough not to ask questions. So being summoned to the President’s mountain refuge with little information as to why, did little to faze him. Robert had excelled in the Kobol State Police Force and after quickly moving up through the ranks, had caught the attention of the Secret Service. Shortly after joining, he started making advancements through its ranks as well. Being single allowed him to devote his time to his career with few distractions.

He arrived at the refuge early evening and after being greeted by a member of staff, was escorted into a large meeting room. Even before he arrived at the door his senses were telling him something was off. Something did not feel right. It could be due to the lack of staff on the premises, or more likely due to the lack of service-members. Usually, he would have passed a couple of details on his way, but now that the thought had entered his mind, he realised there was no-one else in sight except for the sole member of staff escorting him. This was indeed very strange. Little did he know though just how strange his evening was about to get.

Through his position he had met the President on countless occasions and often engaged in conversation with him. This evening was no different to start with as President Jackson welcomed him and suggested he took a seat instead of standing to attention. It was at that point his world took a sudden turn. As the door to his right opened a group of individuals entered, one of whom he recognised as the Mayor of New London, or more correctly three of whom he recognised as the mayor. They were closely followed by two beings, the like of which he had never seen before.

“Don’t be alarmed Agent, they mean us no harm. The Cylons have returned, and they have evolved somewhat since we last saw them. They want me to travel with them to their

home world to see for myself just how they have changed, so I can reassure the people of Kobol that their intentions are indeed peaceful, and I have agreed.

“My Chief of Staff, however, has insisted that a member of the Service accompany me, and that’s where you come in. You come highly recommended, and I understand from your profile that you are familiar with Sofia Larson’s book. I feel that it may be a requirement for this trip. All I ask of you is that you keep an open mind.”

“Sir, if I may speak openly. If you say that we are in no danger, then I accept your judgement. I am however not fully at ease with the situation.”

Agent Taylor looked around at those gathered, his eyes eventually settling on the two strange looking beings. “Evolved you say, just how have they changed so radically, so quickly? They look nothing like the Cylons in our books.”

It was the *actual* Mayor Galen who responded. “The Cylons from the planet you call Earth were a reinvention. As you know from Sofia’s writings, Cylons precede the events on that planet. We are descendants of the twelve colonial models.” He pointed to himself and the other Galens. “My two compatriots over there are a recent evolution, a way to encompass a biological form without remaining overly humanoid.” Sitting down next to Agent Taylor and the President, Galen took time to explain what would happen on their coming trip, and what the Cylons hoped would be the outcome.

The meeting went on for many hours and although Agent Taylor was extremely tired when he finally made it into bed, he found it difficult to fall asleep. Instead, his mind kept replaying things over and over. It was not very often that he felt not in control of the events around him. Usually, when accompanying the President on a journey, everything was planned out down to the smallest detail. The travelling, the meetings, and the accommodation. Nothing was left to chance. On top of that, every option had a backup. What was being asked of him here though, was entirely different. On this journey they would be at the mercy of the newly returned Cylons. A race that had without remorse started a nuclear war on Earth to achieve their independence. Millions had been exterminated in the blink of an eye. Furthermore, assuming that Sofia Larson's book was as entirely factual as it now appeared to be, he had to also the other wars that had been started by a Cylon race. The original Kobol, the original Earth and all the planets of the colonies had been devastated by Cylons. Even if they *had* evolved as they said they had, he felt an unease about trusting them. Yet he knew it was not his place to judge them. That alone, was the President's decision. Whatever happened, Agent Taylor knew he had to follow his President's lead.

Just before the Cylon shuttle arrived to transport them to their main ship the next day, President Jackson sat at his desk in his office overlooking the forest surrounding the mountain refuge. He had just finished proofreading a handwritten letter addressed to Christopher Smith. In it he explained the true nature of his journey and instructed what must happen, should he not return. He truly had no idea if humanity could withstand another war with the Cylons, but the prospect was bleak. All he could do was place his trust in the Mayor, and himself.

Placing the letter in a white addressed envelope, he folded the back flap down before dripping wax over the joint and embedding his Presidential seal into it. It was an extremely antiquated method for sealing a letter, but this way he knew it would convey its importance.

He met Agent Taylor by the front door to the building complex and after a short exchange, they made their way over to the landing pad about fifty meters to the west. Thankfully the light drizzle that had plagued the night had subsided for the time being. It seemed strange seeing a space transport landing on the pad as they approached, and although he thought hard, Graham could not recall the last time one had been there. Momentarily he wondered if he should have enrolled someone to take photos of his departure, for the historical records. It was too late now though and besides, beyond Agent Taylor and himself, no one else knew.

They were greeted at the base of the entrance ramp by *Mayor* Galen, with the other Cylons already seated, and without hesitation followed him inside. Apart from the extra ceiling height, the interior of the transport could easily have been one of the many produced on Kobol, Graham noted somewhat disappointedly. He wasn't exactly sure what he had been expecting, he just wished it did not look like one of theirs.

Once seated, Graham and Agent Taylor exchanged glances as the ramp closed and the transport took off. Their ascent out of the atmosphere was one of the smoothest Graham had ever experienced, and deep down inside he wished there was a window so he could see the dwindling sphere of Kobol below them.

"We're going to make a short FTL jump to rendezvous with our Base-star." Galen informed over the low deep hum of the vessel's engines.

Only five minutes after leaving Kobol, the transport set down on a landing bay in one of the newer Base-stars, and finally Graham got the '*alien*' technology look he had hoped for.

Although the journey to the Cylon's Kobol was mundane, it was thankfully short and their arrival in Athena City was somewhat more prestigious than Graham had anticipated. After landing at a spaceport on the outskirts of the city, they were ushered into an opened top wheelless transport, for the short trip into the centre. President Jackson tried to take in as much as he could, but there was too much to see. The buildings lining their route were mostly tall and covered in what first looked like a blueish glass, but after a closer scrutiny seemed to be some form of semi-transparent biomass. The street itself was impeccably clean and lined with thousands of onlookers who had turned out to witness the historic event. Even though during their space flight he had tried to prepare for it, the President found it strange to see so many identical faces. On *his* Kobol virtually every individual had a different appearance, but here on the Cylon's Kobol there were only the twelve humanoid Cylons and as far as he could tell three or four different Biologicals, as they had been introduced to him.

Their journey took them on a circumventing spiral that would eventually lead them to the central opera house. President Jackson had the distinct feeling that there was a more direct route they could have taken but kept his feelings to himself. As they rounded the final corner though, he felt his jaw drop open upon seeing the city centre. The building in front of them looked so familiar but took a bit of searching in his brain to identify.

"Is that the opera house from Sofia Larson's book?" He asked turning in amazement to Galen, who smiled upon seeing his reaction. It was one of the moments he had been looking forwards to.

"Yes, well sort of at least. The original was obviously destroyed on Kobol thousands of years ago, long before we even existed. This is a replica pieced together from the description given to Miss Larson, coupled with snippets of a collective memory from the Six's and Eights. Some of their models shared a vision of the interior which were partially stored on the backup that the twelve humanoids were rescued from.

"We spent a long time reconstructing it as the centre piece of our city. We felt it important to maintain some connection to the Kobol that pre-existed us. If it was possible, we would have liked to include some part of Larsa. That was Kobol's original prehistory name before it was destroyed in a great war. As you know the survivors of that war became the Lords of Kobol. Alas there is no information about the planet at that time. Instead, we settled for naming our government headquarters 'Larsa House'. We will be visiting that at a later stage, there's a lot of Cylons there who are very interested in hearing from you first hand."

As their motorcade came to a halt, the President and agent Taylor stepped out of their transport and had to take a moment to admire the view before them. The building was truly a work of art, expertly recreated. President Jackson, having read Sofia's book so many times, felt as though he already knew every millimetre of it. It had been a centre portion of the story regarding the hybrid child Hera, who was widely believed to be Mitochondrial Eve from his Earth's prehistory.

'All that has happened over thousands of years has brought us to this moment,' he thought. 'Countless wars and loss of life, both human and Cylon. If we don't make an assertive effort now, it will all have been for nothing.'

"It is a beautiful building Galen, and you have every right to be proud of it." He said pointing to the opera house. "As is the rest of your city. Although I've most likely only seen a tiny fraction of it, I can already see how far your society has evolved. However, I still have thousands of questions that need to be answered."

"That is why we brought you her Mr. President." Galen smiled. "We are an open book. Ask away and we will do our best to answer truthfully."

"You still call me Mr. President, Galen. Yet I am not really your President. That title surely belongs to the Cylon we're about to meet."

"President Jackson, Sir. You are my friend and more importantly my President, just as much as our current Cylon Leader. That fact will never change."

President Jackson turned to agent Taylor, who had remained mostly silent during the journey through the city. No doubt it had dawned on him that without his side arm, which the President had insisted he leave behind on the ship, he could do little to protect them should the Cylons attack. Even with his weapon it would be a futile gesture.

"So, agent Taylor are we ready? I get the feeling that your name will also be entered in the history books after this."

“I’m only a bystander Sir, but I’m as ready as I can be, although I do wonder why I am actually here.”

His comment caused Graham to laugh. “Yes, I see your point, we are somewhat like General Custer of old. All alone and greatly outnumbered! I am however glad you’re here; this would be more daunting on my own than I had thought.”

Facing the gathered crowd of onlookers, Graham took a moment to wave his gratitude, before turning back towards the building. Then with a feeling of importance he followed Galen and Moon into its luxurious interior, for what would eventually become one of the most important meetings in all of humanity’s existence.

11: EPILOGUE

Galen stood on his balcony looking out over the forest to the west of their house. Above him the sky was a crisp deep blue, promising yet another warm summer day, and all around him the low hum of indigenous insects sang like a choir. Noticing movement off to his right he watched as a six legged descendent of an Earth deer broke cover and darted across the long grass of an adjacent field, most likely heading for the water hole on the other side.

Over a hundred years had passed since President Jackson's historic journey to the Cylon's home world. The initial meeting had only lasted for a couple of hours but was followed by many more, and after spending a few weeks with the Cylons he returned to his Kobol to inform his fellow humans about their intentions, and the agreement he had entered on humanity's behalf. An initial shock had soon been replaced by fear and apprehension, but the President was patient and over time Kobol's population became more accustomed to the Cylon's return and continued existence. Now finally all the worlds were united without long reaching mistrust or conflict. Skirmishes broke out from time to time, usually fuelled by misunderstandings or religious beliefs, but never passed a point where a diplomatic solution could not be found.

Furthermore, resurrection technology was now greatly extending human life, and with a multitude of habitable planets within reach of their now highly advanced FTL drives, any overcrowding issues were irrelevant. Theoretically they could fill every habitable planet in the galaxy, but that problem was a long way off and besides, currently combined human and Cylon technology were edging them towards a FTL drive that could breach the gap between galaxies.

Although living to a grand old age, and despite the offer to use Cylon resurrection technology to extend his life into a biological body, President Jackson was now long gone, and the planet was in the hands of others. His grandson was currently on a fast-track line to the Office, so maybe one day a President Jackson would return. For their part, both Galen and Tory had resurrected several times over the last few decades and looked just as young as they had during the exodus from the twelve colonies.

Movement behind Galen drew his attention away from the scenery outside, causing him to turn slowly around. Upon seeing Tory approaching whilst gently carrying a baby girl in her protective arms, a broad smile filled his face. The girl, wrapped tightly in a thick white blanket, had black hair and a medium dark complexion. At only one month old, the as yet unnamed girl was not only their own, but also the first naturally conceived Cylon child since the colonisation of the first planet to be named Earth.